

Saleh to visit S. Arabia within days

RIYADH (AFP) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh will visit Saudi Arabia in the next few days to try to resolve a border dispute between the two neighbours, Yemen's parliament speaker said here Monday. Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmar said King Fahd told him Sunday that he would "favourably welcome" a visit by the Yemeni president, and Mr. Saleh would arrive in the kingdom "in the coming days." Mr. Saleh said on Dec. 14 he would "soon" meet King Fahd in a bid to "open a new chapter in relations between the two countries." In early December Sanaa reported border clashes between Yemeni and Saudi forces in which three Yemenis were wounded. Riyadh said a Saudi worker was killed. The two countries are locked in a long-running dispute over their border, notably in the Najran, Jazan and Asir regions which have been under Saudi control since a 1934 agreement. Sheikh Al Ahmar, who heads the Islamic fundamentalist Al Islah party in Yemen's ruling coalition, said discussions to resolve the conflict had reached "an advanced stage" in technical committees.

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Rabin in Oman

MUSCAT (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is currently on a ground-breaking visit to Oman for talks with Sultan Qaboos Ben Said, the official Omani News Agency (ONA) said Monday.

The visit is a first to Oman by an Israeli head of government since the Jewish state was created in 1948. Israel and Oman have no diplomatic ties.

"The Omani sovereign and the Israeli prime minister met to give a boost to the Middle East peace process and to support efforts to secure a comprehensive and fair peace in the region," ONA said.

Oman was the first Gulf Arab country to have hosted an official Israeli delegation, during multilateral negotiations on water resources last April.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said during a visit to Oman last month that diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab countries could be established in "the very near future."

Israel Radio said Mr. Rabin, accompanied by senior advisors, met Omani leaders including Sultan Qaboos.

Israeli officials were not immediately available for comment.

Libya fears full oil embargo

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libya fears that the U.N. Security Council will impose on it a full oil embargo at Washington's demand, Information Minister Ahmad Ibrahim said Monday. "Libya expects a tightening of the embargo as long as Washington dominates the Security Council... I do not rule out an oil embargo," Mr. Ibrahim said. Oil makes up 90 per cent of the hard currency revenue of Libya, which produces nearly 1.5 million barrels of crude per day yielding \$9 to \$10 billion a year.

Rafsanjani rules out third term

TEHRAN (R) — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has said he would not seek to change the Iranian constitution so that he could serve a third term. "I personally don't think it's advisable to amend the constitution, and I wouldn't like to extend my executive responsibilities," Mr. Rafsanjani said in an interview on Iranian Television. Mr. Rafsanjani's second four-year term ends in August 1997.

Vietnamese economic team visits Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — A Vietnamese economic mission has arrived in Israel for talks on cooperation and bilateral trade agreement, the Israeli foreign ministry said on Monday. The mission, led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was headed by deputy Light Industry Minister Nguyen Minh Thong. The deputy minister will examine the possibilities for economic cooperation and prepare the ground for a bilateral trade agreement, it said. Vietnam has expressed interest in strengthening its economic relations with Israel and in encouraging Israeli investment, the ministry said.

Pakistani poet dies

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Leading Pakistani poet Parveen Shakir was killed when her car was hit by a passenger bus here Monday, the Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) news agency reported. Parveen, 42, winner of top national awards for Urdu language literature, was also a civil servant in the tax department. Parveen's driver was also killed when the automobile was rammed by a bus, APP said. The report added that the bus driver fled the scene of the accident.

Time for reorganisation has come — King Hussein

Jordanian-Palestinian relations are strategic

Fruits of peace need time to manifest themselves

By Abdullah Hassanat
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein disclosed yesterday that Jordan was gearing up for a major government overhaul which was needed to meet the demands of the new era in the Kingdom's history.

The King expected the change to come shortly after the debate in Parliament on the 1995 fiscal budget and his return from a short visit to Austria that starts today.

The King did not say whether he will appoint a new government or order a major reshuffle to undertake the job, which would include legislative and administrative reforms, but he stressed that "reorganisation is necessary since this is a new, different era in Jordan's life and it needs to be governed by a new spirit and fresh efforts."

The King, who was addressing a group of journalists and columnists over a working lunch at the Royal Court, commended the present government for having fulfilled its mission and carried Jordan through the difficult task of peace negotiations. Those

King vows action to tackle traffic chaos

IN HIS meeting with the journalists yesterday, King Hussein pledged to make tackling traffic problems in the Kingdom one of the main priorities at the impending programme of reorganisation.

The King said he was appalled by what he saw while travelling from Aqaba to Amman along the desert highway a few days ago.

Long vehicles were racing along the road ignoring traffic signs, some of which were misplaced anyway and tyres littered the highway, the King noted.

"What was amazing," the King said, "was that there were so many police patrols along the highway," and nothing was being done about the hazardous driving conditions.

"This is a priority issue," the King said, adding that something must be done to ensure safety and order on the roads.

The King said he was distressed by the number of accidents in the country and what that meant in terms of human and material losses.

who leave their posts, the King said, should not come under criticism as if they have not done a good job. "Change is made necessary sometimes not because (officials) have not performed well, but rather because new circumstances require new responsibilities and different people to handle them."

international fora and with friendly nations and the Arab countries.

The King said he had called Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat on Sunday to coordinate the chairman's visit that was supposed to take place on the same day. The visit has now been deferred until the King's return from Austria where he will undergo medical check-ups for an old ear infection.

The King described Jordanian-Palestinian relations as strategic and stressed that Jordan will continue to extend all possible help to the Palestinian people to help them gain their rights. He said Jordan will not give up its role in Jerusalem and that bad the issue not been included in both the Washington Declaration and the peace treaty with Israel it would have created a vacuum for others to make use of.

The King also reviewed what he saw as the sad situation in the Arab World characterised by lack of resolve, the absence of democracy and human rights and the lack of minimum consensus

(Continued on page 7)

Commandos storm hijacked plane

MARSEILLE (Agencies) — French anti-terrorist police stormed a hijacked jet at Marseille on Monday, killing all four young hostage takers and saving the lives of some 170 passengers and crew.

French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur told reporters he had ordered the plane to be stormed "as the only way of safeguarding human lives."

The interior ministry in Paris said seven hostages — the plane's chief pilot and six passengers were injured in the assault, along with seven members of the elite paramilitary gendarmerie unit.

Most of the hostages were Algerians, but some 40 French nationals were believed to have been aboard.

Mr. Balladur said the storming took place "with exemplary courage and efficiency."

ICI television ran what it said was exclusive film of the 15-minute attack, showing black-clad and hooded officers entering the Airbus A300 by front and rear passenger doors, as well as firing at the

plane from the tarmac.

The interior ministry said all four hijackers who seized the plane in Algiers on Saturday were killed. They had earlier been identified by Algerian authorities as members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA).

The GIA is the most violent of the Algerian fundamentalist organisations battling the government since it called off 1992 general elections which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) had been poised to win.

Interior Minister Charles Pasqua said earlier one of the hijackers had been captured and arrested.

The plane was stormed after the hostage-takers reportedly executed another of their captives, adding to three they had already killed in Algiers. However, the report of the fourth hostage's death was later denied by French officials.

The assault on the A300 plane, which had arrived in Marseille early Monday, also followed the breakdown of all contact with negotiators

trying to persuade them to give themselves up peacefully.

Several explosions rocked Marseille airport as the crack GIGN anti-terrorist forces moved in on the plane, which had without permission moved from its isolated location on the airfield to a position in front of the main terminal.

The explosions blew off the aircraft doors to permit the GIGN troops to enter, the detonations followed by a firefight lasting more than 20 minutes.

Special anti-terrorist forces had earlier been seen rushing into the plane from two gangways rolled up to the rear of the aircraft more than 40 hours after it flew into Marignane airport near here from Algiers.

A fleet of more than 50 ambulances converged on the Airbus.

The hijack drama began in Algiers on Saturday, when the hijackers prevented the aircraft leaving on a scheduled flight to Paris.

During two days at Algiers

airport they killed three passengers, including a French embassy employee killed shortly before the plane was allowed to leave for France on Sunday evening.

The other two victims were a Vietnamese diplomat and an Algerian policeman.

Monday morning they retracted a threat to execute more hostages over their demand that the plane be refuelled to fly to Paris from Marseille. But it was unclear what their exact demands were.

One demand was to hold a press conference, in particular including the U.S. news channel CNN, official sources said.

In a statement in Arabic to AFP, the GIA claimed responsibility for the hijacking shortly after the assault was carried out.

ICI's television film showed GIGN anti-terrorist police forcing front and rear passenger doors of the plane shortly after a fourth hostage was killed at 5.15 pm (1615 GMT).

Hamas threatens 5 more carbombs

KHAN YUNIS (Agencies) — The armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), threatened Monday to carry out five new carbomb attacks on Israelis that would kill "more than 150 soldiers."

"We have five cars set up with explosives and waiting for zero-hour to kill more than 150 dogs, Israeli soldiers," said in a statement by Izzeddin Al Qassam.

The threat was announced over loudspeakers from inside the house of a Hamas suicide bomber who blew himself up at a Jerusalem bus station Sunday, killing himself and injuring 12 people.

Relatives and friends of the bomber, Aiman Radi, converged on his home in the refugee camp of Khan Yunis, as a man read out the Izzeddin Al Qassam statement.

In the name of Qassam, he promised "more heroic, suicide acts."

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein on Monday meets with chief editors and columnists of local newspapers (Petra photo)

Lower House adopts draft budget with 52-22 vote

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The draft fiscal budget for 1995 cleared the Lower House of Parliament late Monday evening after a three-day session in which 54 deputies addressed their views on the JD 1.674 billion draft legislation.

Fifty-two out of 74 deputies attending the session voted in favour of the budget which now goes to the Upper House of Parliament. The dissenting votes were cast by 14 members of the 17-seat Islamic Action Front (IAF) bloc who attended the session and Nazih Ammarin, Bassam Haddadin, Khaleel Haddadin, Awad Khleifat, Abdul Razzaq Tubaishat, Toujan Faisal and Mustafa Shneikat.

Some of the lawmakers who voted against the budget, however, said the minister said the recommendations of the Finance Committee which received 64 out of 74 votes.

The vote on the JD 50 million deficit budget was taken after Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Finance Minister Sami Gammoh responded to the deputies' speeches, some of which included severe criticism of the draft budget and of the government.

In his speech, Dr. Majali announced a seven-point government plan that aims at improving the living conditions of the people, especially those with low and limited incomes.

Dr. Majali said the government was committed to revising the salaries and pensions of military personnel and civil servants, working towards achieving a comprehensive health insurance scheme, reviewing subsidies to make sure they reach the needy and focusing on providing housing to low and limited income

citizens.

The prime minister also pledged to work towards improving the investment environment in the Kingdom and the efficiency and productivity of the government sectors. He also said the government will have as a priority efforts to fight poverty and unemployment as well as unfair trading practices.

Noting the Jordanian economy has received many blows in the last few years but is moving towards recovery, Dr. Majali said the government was seeking financing for a number of projects envisaged under the peace treaty with Israel and that will help reactivate the economy.

The coming year, said Dr. Majali, will witness an improvement in Arab and Muslim relations which will reflect positively on the performance of the economy.

Responding to remarks made by some deputies, the prime minister said the inhabitants of refugee camps in the Kingdom are Jordanian citizens, adding that the Kingdom is careful not to encroach on the duties of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians (UNRWA) to resettle their rights in their homeland: Palestine.

Dr. Majali promised deputies to take their remarks, especially the recommendations of the Finance Committee, into consideration but stressed that it will not be possible for the government to fulfill all their demands though it understands the need for them.

Dr. Majali responded strongly to "some" lawmakers who slander the government and address it with inappropriate language. "What do we say to those (deputies) who slander our country in Arab and Western countries," which they call colonial and yet accept official invitations

to visit them, the prime minister said. "How do we respond to those who make covert threats of inciting violence?"

Dr. Majali stressed the sensitivities of the current era through which the Kingdom is passing and urged cooperation between all branches of the government to face up to the challenges facing the nation.

In his speech Finance Minister Gammoh stressed the coherence of the draft budget and reiterated promises to consider the recommendations of the Finance Committee. But Mr. Gammoh pointed to what he called a lack of consistency in demands for cutting the budget deficit while at the same time asking for increased expenditure.

Deputies opposed to the draft budget were divided between those who based their stand on what clearly appeared to be political reasons and those who had technical objections.

In a speech on behalf of the IAF, Dr. Abdullah Alkhalil, a former president of the Finance Committee, criticised the "exaggerated" way in which the government sold the peace dividend to the people.

He also questioned some of the figures quoted in the budget about inflation, economic growth and foreign debt.

Dr. Alkhalil managed to win the House's approval to include in its recommendation a proposal demanding that the government present the House with a plan for investments in development projects.

But the House turned down a proposal by Dr. Alkhalil to have the Finance Committee investigate the losses in the profits of the Central Bank because the committee's recommendation demanded that the House be allowed access to the reports of the bank auditors.

Yeltsin halts Chechenya assault but maintains hardline stand

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin ordered a suspension of army operations in Chechenya Monday and said it was now possible to end the crisis in the breakaway republic, but he insisted the region was part of Russia and that Moscow would maintain troops there, news agencies reported.

Mr. Yeltsin told a meeting of his security council that Russian troops sent two weeks ago to crush a secessionist rebellion in Chechenya would be confined to temporary bases inside the Caucasus republic, the Interfax and ITAR-TASS news agencies reported.

"We have come to a point where it is possible to bring an end to the participation of the military and move on to a second stage, the setting up of administrative bodies in Chechenya," he was quoted as saying.

But Mr. Yeltsin added that Chechenya, which declared itself independent in 1991, "is our republic and (our troops) will remain there permanently."

"However, it will be Interior Ministry forces which will maintain law and order in Grozny and other districts," he said, raising questions about whether he intended to effectively freeze all military operations in Chechenya or simply shift responsibility for the action from the army to the interior ministry.

Mr. Yeltsin, who had not spoken publicly on the Chechenya crisis since Russian troops moved into the

Caucasus republic on Dec 11, said he would give "sufficiently complete" information on the situation in a televised address to the nation Tuesday.

The Russian intervention force in Chechenya, made up of both regular army and interior ministry troops, has been unable to move closer than 15 kilometres of Grozny despite its vast superiority in firepower over pro-independence forces.

The intervention has been strongly opposed by some senior army officers, including the deputy chief of ground forces, General Eduard Vorobiev who resigned rather than take charge of the operation.

In his remarks to the security council, Mr. Yeltsin acknowledged that the military intervention in Chechenya had encountered "some problems."

And he ordered the security council, Russia's top security body which groups senior ministers and the heads of the two houses of parliament under Mr. Yeltsin's chairmanship, to quickly act for the "restoration of constitutional order in Chechenya."

Mr. Yeltsin's comments came amid an intensification of fighting for the strategic Chechen town of Argun, with Russian artillery, air power and snipers within 800 metres of Chechen defenders of the town, 15 kilometres east of Grozny.

The air rang constantly with the thunder and percussion of the Russian artillery

and tanks, the hammer of machine guns and the crack of sniper fire.

Argun lies on the key eastern route to the neighbouring republic of Dagestan where more Russian armour is massed. Encircling Grozny without taking Argun is impossible and the once-quiet town has become a battlefield.

In Grozny, the Chechen leadership signalled a softening of its official position.

Vice-President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying Chechenya was ready to negotiate with Moscow even while Russian troops were in the region — a departure from its previous line — and might discuss joining a confederation.

There were no air raids on Grozny overnight.

"The first stage is coming to an end," Mr. Yeltsin said in comments before journalists were told to leave the Kremlin meeting.

"We are going to look at when we can 'wind up' the participation of the military and go on to the second stage — forming administrative organs in the Chechen Republic," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's comments gave the impression that Russian forces now controlled the situation in Chechenya.

This did not appear to reflect the reality on the ground where there were several reports by Russian news agencies of fierce resistance by forces loyal to separatist Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

مكتبة ابن رشد



ISRAELI RAID: Bassam Suliman from Kferouman village in South Lebanon carries his daughter whilst checking his home for damage, after it was shelled by Israeli artillery

Saturday in retaliation for a Hizbollah attack in Israel's self-declared "security zone." (AFP photo)

Rabbani plans to resign at end of December

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, whose official two-year term in office expires at the end of the year, is expected to announce his resignation soon, a senior official said here Monday.

"The president will resign and hand power over to Mohammad Shah Fazli," the Rabbani administration official told AFP.

The president's press spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad neither confirmed nor denied the report, but said an official statement would be made in the next few days.

Mohammad Shah Fazli, who is president of the

Afghan Supreme Court, confirmed Mr. Rabbani's willingness to resign, but did not talk of his succession.

"I have talked to the president about the transfer of power, but not about to whom it should go. I cannot say who will be the next president," Mr. Fazli said.

Mr. Fazli, who swore Mr. Rabbani into power in the controversial Shorua Ahli Hal-va-Aqd (Council of Elders) election of December 1992, is a respected religious scholar and member of the Harakat-i-Inqilab-i-Islami faction, led by Mr. Rabbani's ally Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi.

He condemned the "unlawful" factional fighting in Afghanistan following the April 1992 rebel victory, in which hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians have been killed and made homeless.

"What has happened in the past two years is non-Islamic and regretful," commented Mr. Fazli.

The chief judge blamed Mr. Rabbani's opponents' forces for the bloody fighting.

Mr. Rabbani's main rival, Hezb-i-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, has consistently called for Mr. Rabbani's resignation before any ceasefire deal can be made.

Yet, despite news reports to the contrary, there has been no serious fighting in Kabul for several weeks, although from time to time small bursts of heavy artillery fire are traded, while front-line troops fire off rounds to relieve their boredom.

General Hamid Gul, former head of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) — which clandestinely channelled masses of arms and ammunition to the rebels fighting the former Soviet invaders and their Afghan communist allies — made his second visit to Mr. Hekmatyar on Monday.

Algerian source says hijack impossible without help

ALGIERS (AFP) — The deadly hijacking of a French airliner at the heavily guarded Algiers international airport highlights the complicity between Islamic guerrillas battling to topple the military-backed government and elements of the country's security.

Members of the commando which seized Air France Airbus Saturday wore uniforms of Algeria's national carrier Air Algérie and

carried official badges, released passengers said. This allowed them to get near the plane as more than 200 passengers were boarding the aircraft.

"It is normally impossible for anyone to enter the airport premises without a search and still less so to get onto the tarmac and close to the planes," said a security expert at the airport.

Houari Boumedienne International Airport is a strategic

site for Algerian authorities who stepped up security there after a bomb attack in August 1992 which left nine people dead and 123 wounded.

Air Algérie pilot Rachid Hechaichi was found guilty of the attack and was executed on Aug. 30 along with six Muslim fundamentalists.

Since the attack all vehicles and people including employees are searching.

Referring to Saturday's attack, the security expert said: "Four or five men including one with a Kalashnikov, a weapon that is difficult to hide, could never have entered without somebody on the ground helping them, and distract even a poorly trained security force."

He acknowledged that the Christmas rush may have helped the commando as security forces were busy checking passengers.

The hijacking must have

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinians dig tunnels into Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinians have been digging tunnels to infiltrate Israel from Gaza, police officials said Monday, a day after a Palestinian from the self-rule strip carried out a suicide attack in Jerusalem.

Many tunnels have been dug despite the deep concrete-filled trenches which complement the electric fences ringing the strip, they added. Nearly 34,000 "illegal" Palestinians have been arrested in Israel this year, a senior police official, Dany Prinkler, told Israeli radio.

"These infiltrations put Israel's security in danger," he said. A 25-year-old militant from the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, Aymen Kamel Radd, on Sunday set off an explosive belt he was wearing after trying to get on a bus in west Jerusalem, killing himself and wounding 12 others.

Damascus Declaration meeting to be in February

CAIRO (R) — The foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and the six Gulf states — the countries that signed the Damascus Declaration 1991 — will meet in Cairo in early February, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said.

Mr. Musa was speaking at Cairo airport on Sunday night on his return from Saudi Arabia. On Friday he said some ministers had previous engagements there. The foreign ministers of the loose alliance last met in October after Iraq moved troops to the Kuwaiti border. But the meeting did not reach any conclusions and Mr. Musa said at the time that experts would discuss some Egyptian ideas.

Journalists, Brothers protest detention

CAIRO (R) — The Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian Union of Journalists protested on Monday against the detention of a prominent politician and journalist close to the country's Islamist movement.

Adel Hussein, secretary-general of the Labour Party, was detained for a further 15 days on Sunday in connection with leaflets he allegedly left on a plane two months ago. The Ministry of Defence also wants Mr. Hussein questioned about an article he wrote in the Labour Party newspaper Al-Sab'ah, saying the United States and Israel were plotting to strip Egypt of its regional influence.

The freedoms committee of the union said it condemned what it called the arbitrary measures taken against Mr. Hussein. "The committee members called for his quick release and asked the union council to meet immediately to put an end to abuses against journalists," it said.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which is not legally recognised, said it condemned the detention of Mr. Hussein "in the context of the exceptional measures which we have long said prevent parties and all popular forces... from playing an active political role."

"It raises a major question mark about the seriousness of the government in dealing with the issue of democracy."

Turkey says 4,000 rebels killed in 1994

ANKARA (R) — Turkey said on Monday its security forces had killed almost 4,000 Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) rebels this year.

Usal Erkan, governor of the 10-province area in southeastern Turkey under emergency area, told a news conference that 3,905 PKK members had been killed and more than 3,000 arrested since the beginning of the year.

Associated Press agency. "The organisation has received blows it can't recover from and is facing starvation this winter. It is in a state of panic," Mr. Erkan said. He did not give casualties suffered by the security forces. Both sides in the 10-year-old conflict give exaggerated accounts of their combat successes.

Mr. Erkan said the PKK had killed more than 900 civilians, most of them elderly men, this year. More than 80 children were among the dead, he said.

President Suleyman Demirel said last week that about 14,000 people had been killed in the PKK's fight to establish a Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey.

U.S. escorts 'escapee' vessel in Gulf

DUBAI (R) — U.S. forces in the Gulf enforcing U.N. sanctions on Iraq are escorting to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) a vessel that tried to slip away from their control on Christmas Eve, a U.S. government spokesman said on Monday.

The Honduran-flagged cargo vessel Ajmir had tried to escape on Saturday night, putting its lights out

and steaming away from the U.S. frigate Vandegrift, he said. This forced marines and sailors to board it by helicopter the next morning and reassert control, he said.

The Ajmir was stopped in mid-December with a cargo of what the navy said was Iraqi dates, and was now being escorted from the central Gulf down to the UAE. Iraqi exports are banned under U.N. sanctions imposed because of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and in the past few months the navy has diverted several vessels which it suspected of violating sanctions.

Israel to test new anti-missile missile

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel will soon start testing a new version of its Arrow anti-missile missile, the Defence Ministry said here Monday.

Project manager Uri Rubin told the monthly air force newspaper that six tests were planned over 18 months. "The Arrow 2 will be a new, smaller missile that will build on its precursor's success," Mr. Rubin said.

Most of the technology for Arrow 2 was developed in Israel, which will now finance most of the project. The Arrow is built by the state-run Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI). The United States funded 80 per cent of the first phase of the missile project, costing \$156 million.

In April 1992 Israel and the United States signed an agreement to invest \$320 million in the second phase. The Patriot system supplied by the United States was only partially successful in destroying the 39 Scud missiles fired at Israel by Iraq during the January-February 1991 Gulf war.

Militant leader gives himself up in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — A wanted leader of the banned militant group Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya has given himself up to the police, the official daily Al-Akharat said Monday.

Ramadan Ali Hassan, who was the group's chief in the north of Minya province, handed over his weapons to the police and admitted his militant activities, the newspaper said.

The local head of security, General Yusef Shaker, decided to release him, the newspaper said. Meanwhile, a 31-year-old man died in a crossfire when militants attacked a police station in Minya's Abu Qorqas village on Sunday, police said.

Two policemen were also wounded in the shooting. A total of 540 people have died since militants launched a violent campaign in March 1992. Fundamentalists have switched their operations to Minya after being driven out of their former southern stronghold of Assiut by the security forces.

Indonesia says no to Israeli tourists

JAKARTA (AP) — Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country, on Monday rejected a call to allow Israeli tourists to visit.

"Our position on Israel is not changed, we will continue to deny entry permits to Israeli tourists," Andi Mappasene, director general of the tourism ministry, told the Associated Press.

He was reacting to a prominent Muslim scholar's recent comments in local newspapers interviews that Indonesia should consider opening diplomatic ties with Tel Aviv now that peace is developing between Israel and Palestine.

The scholar, Abdul Rahman Wahid, was reelected last week as head of an influential organisation of the country's top Islamic scholars.

Shenouda complains about discrimination

CAIRO (AFP) — Coptic Christian Pope Shenouda III has complained that his community is facing increasing job discrimination in the Egyptian civil service and state sectors.

"There is a continuous decline in the nomination of Copts in the civil service, universities and in the judiciary," he told the opposition weekly Al-Arabi.

Copts comprise five to six million of Egypt's 65 million-population. Pope Shenouda III also complained about that his community still needed presidential approval to build or repair churches in a policy dating from the era of Turkish Ottoman rule (1517-1805).

The Coptic pope on the other hand branded as "shameful" the West's stance towards Bosnia's Muslims.

"We absolutely do not accept the massacres committed against the Muslims in Bosnia, the West's stance is shameful and disappointing. It shows Europe's impotence to end this human tragedy, and its fear of getting engaged in a war, or military confrontation with the Serbs," Shenouda renewed his opposition to Copts visiting Jerusalem, saying "only recognises would go there," in violation of his ban.

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17:30 Un Pour Tous
18:00 Les Intéprètes
18:30 Les Intéprètes
19:00 New in French
19:15 Magazine Sportif
19:30 Black Beauty
20:00 Bogies Dinner
20:30 Quantum Leap
21:10 Shades of L.A.
22:00 News in English
22:30 Grusko

PRAYER TIMES

05:06 Fajr
06:28 (Sunrise) Doha
11:35 Dhuhr
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16:41 Maghreb
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Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be sunny with temperatures rising further and winds southeasterly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm. On Wednesday, a cold front is expected to affect the Kingdom.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 3/17
Aqaba 10/24
Deserts 2/16
Jordan Valley 9/22

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 16, Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 19 per cent, Aqaba 8 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Youssef Abdo 694916
Dr. Bassim Qaddumi 648633
Dr. Youssef Al Fajhi 736988
Dr. Yusef Abu Dhiab 738948
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Naitroukh pharmacy 625672
Al Selam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamelani pharmacy 637660
Naitroukh pharmacy 625672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IBRID:
Dr. Fayed Al Qadi 248743
Alqods pharmacy (-)
ZARQA:
Dr. Khalil Abu Hussein 985000
Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 845402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information 121
(directory assistance) 010230
Overseas Calls 623101
Central Amman Telephone 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 773111
Jordan Television 680100
Radio Jordan 680100
Water Authority 615615
Jordan Electricity Authority 615615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn 64428116
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 64244112
Jabal Amman Maternity 642442
Malham, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shamsi 66471714
Shamsi Hospital 669131
University Hospital 6672219
Al-Musabir Hospital 6641646
Al-Ahli, Abdali 777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 7751126
Army, Marja 89161715
Queen Alia Hospital 60224030
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital 09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)989090
IBRID:
Prince Baqum Hospital (02)23335
Great Catholic Hospital (02)22225
Ibn Al Nafis Hospital (02)47100
AQABA:
Prince Heza Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sanaa (RJ)
08:35 Jeddah (RJ)
09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:55 Beirut (RJ)
10:05 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Doha (RJ)
11:10 New Delhi (RJ)
16:00 Cairo (RJ)
17:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
19:05 Bangkok (RJ)
19:05 Casablanca, Tunis (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

08:45 Khartoum (SD)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in lbs per kg.

Apple 700-500
Banana 600-400
Banana (Mukhammar) 620
Cabbage 240-160
Carrot 450-240
Cauliflower 380-180
Clementine 380-240
Cucumbers (large) 250-150
Cucumbers (small) 500-300
Eggplant 340-240
Garlic 500-310
Grape Fruit 240-140
Lemon 240-140
Marrow (large) 160-140
Marrow (small) 140-120
Onion (green) 380-240
Onion (dry) 430-150
Orange 320-140
Pepper (hot) 540-120
Pepper (sweet) 440-400
Potato 140-200
Radish 240-150
Spinach 180-140
String Beans 300-240
Tomato 500-240



The Arabian oryx was reintroduced in Jordan in 1978 after it had been extinct for 60 years

Workshop on protecting the oryx to analyse animal's reintroduction

AMMAN (J.T.) — A three-day workshop on protecting the Arabian oryx will start Saturday at the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN).

Participants in the workshop will discuss different issues related to the large straight-horned antelope since its reintroduction in 1978 to this region after it had been extinct in Jordan for 60 years, including the problems facing its reintroduction programme and the increase in its numbers in the Shoumari Wildlife Reserve, according to a RSCN statement.

The workshop, which will be opened by Anis Muasher, the chairman of the board of directors and president of the RSCN, will present international as well as Arab expertise in the way of protecting the Arabian oryx and the experience of some countries when they released the oryx in its natural environment.

Khalid Irani, head of the reserves section, said that a well-integrated strategy for the Arabian oryx will be developed to include the places that the process of release will take place in the Jordanian desert, the problems that might be faced, and the financing needed to do so, the RSCN said.

According to Mr. Irani, the oryx was extinct in the 1920s and was reintroduced in 1978; the last head was killed in the Middle East region in 1972. The RSCN reintroduced eight heads to Jordan; today the society counts 170 heads.

The participants in the workshop are: Issa Shahin, deputised member of the board of directors of RSCN, Chris Johnson, World Bank representative (director of the Research and Survey Section, Khalid Irani, Alia Hatough of Jordan University, Henry Hinton of the University of Maine and Michael Woodford, international expert on the Arabian oryx for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Devin Brown of the University of Durham, Zuhair Amer of the Jordan University of Science and Technology, Basil Arafat of the Society for Animal Protection, Edward Alley of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and Ahmad Shalan, senior ranger at the Shoumari Wildlife Reserve.

CSC finds jobs for 5,081 applicants

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) found jobs for 5,081 unemployed applicants to November 1994, according to a CSC statement Monday.

Of a total 106,139 job applicants 3,848 university graduates were offered jobs with government departments, the commission said.

The CSC said 1,138 community college graduates were employed, and 95,149 high school certificate holders found jobs through the commission.

According to the release, 223 doctorate degree holders, 70 medical board degree holders, 1,099 masters degrees holders, 178 high diploma holders, 31,851 bachelors degree holders, 60,090 college diploma holders and 12,628 tawjihi certificate holders applied for jobs with the CSC this year.

The commission meanwhile announced that a total of 1,255 civil servants were classified during the first 11 months of 1994, with males accounting for 85 per cent of that total.

It also announced that 19,591 civil servants were promoted: 48 to the special category, 171 to the first category, and 4,320 to the

Inter-Continental to start privatisation

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Amman's landmark Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel, arguably the Kingdom's most prestigious, is on the block for a multi-million dinar privatisation, officials said Monday.

It will be the first majority government-owned establishment to be privatised in line with the gradual move in Jordan to divert state capital to new projects rather than hanging on to profitable ventures, they said.

Mohammad Batayneh, head of the Jordan Investment Corporation (JIC), the government's investment arm, said the corporation would be selling its 87 per cent stake in the Jordan Hotels and Tourism Company which owns Inter-Continental.

That would mean 3,216,000 shares of the company in the market. The rest of the 3.66 million shares are owned by the private sector, including the Jordan National Bank and businessman and banker Khalil Talhouh.

Shares of the company averaged around JD6.4 each during 1994 at the Amman Financial Market.

The Jordan Hotels and Tourism Company, which also owned a hotel on the western shore of the Dead Sea until the 1967 war, distributed a 10 per cent

dividend in 1992 and 1994 after making a gross profit of around JD2.3 million, said Abdul Rahman Bahri, director-general of the firm.

Mr. Batayneh said the sale of shares would be through bids.

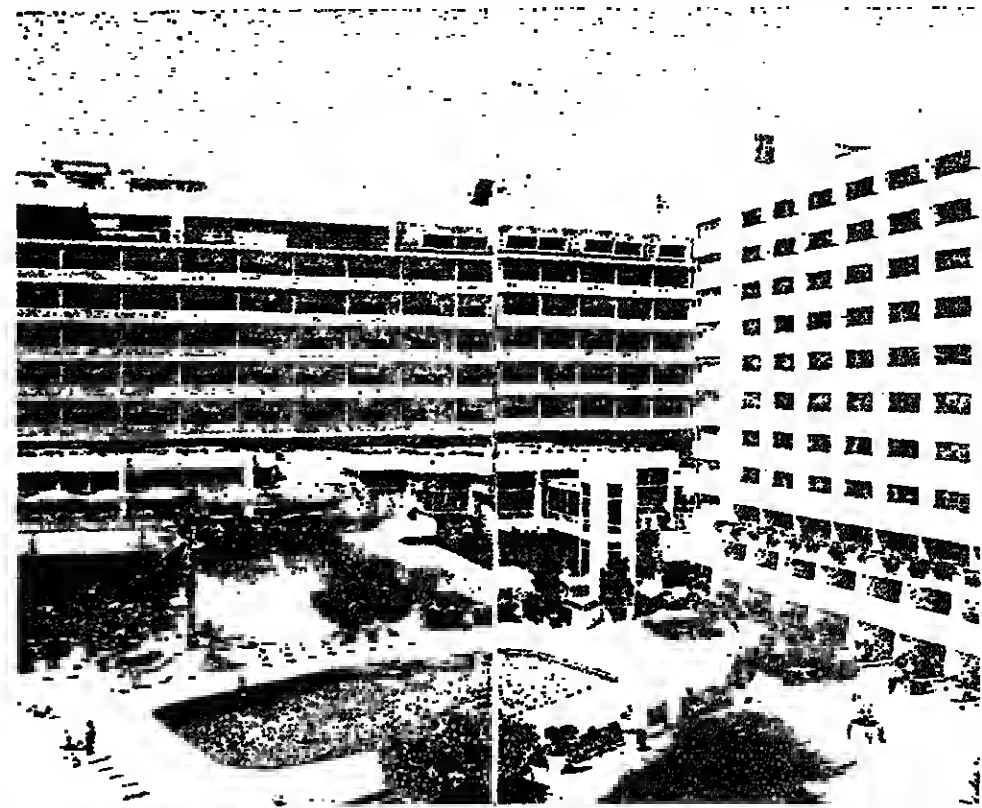
"We will soon be inviting bids for the shares through advertisements in the local and international media, with the last date for receiving bids set at Jan. 26, 1995," said Mr. Batayneh, adding that the only precondition would be that bids should be for blocks of 500,000 shares.

According to Mr. Batayneh, although it was decided earlier that the ownership ratio should be 51:49 in favour of Jordanians, a draft law on investments released last week would open the door for full foreign ownership of the hotel depending on foreign investors' interest in the establishment.

Proceeds from the sales would be channelled to projects in the tourism and industrial sector, he said without giving details.

The Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel's agreement with the international Inter-Continental group of hotels is valid until the year 2002 and is unlikely to be affected by the change in ownership.

Irrespective of the equity value in the market, the hotel is estimated to be worth nearly JD35 million.



The Jordan Inter-Continental Hotel in Amman (file photo)

The annual report of the owning company for the year 1993 showed that it employed 344 people. It had an occupancy rate of 46.2 per cent during 1993 and 43.8 per cent in 1992.

Finance Minister Sami Gammoh, disclosing that the government was planning to sell its shares in "one of Jordan's most

prominent" hotels, told a meeting last month that the sale was the most solid sign of the government's intention to privatise major public sector entities.

Other public sector entities expected to be turned into commercial entities with varying degrees of government ownership before possible full privatisation are the Telecom-

munications Corporation and Royal Jordanian, the national carrier.

The Jordan Investment Corporation holds shares in several other major hotels in Jordan. It was not immediately known whether the government was considering selling any of them.

Police investigate death of burn victim

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Monday were investigating the death of a 35-year-old woman who was found burnt beyond recognition Saturday when a fire destroyed the victim's home in Wadi Al Haddadeh near downtown Amman, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

According to the report, the woman's body was discovered by CDD rescue units after they extinguished the blaze.

The report said that the woman, identified as Khulud B., was found in the bath-tub by the CDD officers.

The woman's body was taken to Al Bashir Hospital for autopsy.

Police declined to release any details and said they were waiting for the forensic examination to determine if the woman was murdered before she was burnt.

Accidents kill 2

Meanwhile, two people were killed and one was listed in critical condition in two separate accidents, CDD reports Monday said.

In Aqaba, a 25-year-old man was burnt beyond recognition on Sunday in a road accident on the Amman-Aqaba road, reports said.

Mohammad M., died as

a result of first degree burns when the cement tanker he was driving lost control, rolled over and exploded into flames, the report said.

In Salt, a 23-year-old Egyptian worker suffocated to death, and another man was listed in critical condition from carbon monoxide poisoning, CDD reports said.

Abdul Razaq Abdul Aziz and his 29-year-old friend Mohammad Y. were discovered by a friend.

Both victims were rushed to Salt Hospital. Mr. Abdul Aziz was declared dead on arrival. Hospital sources said that Mr. Mohammad was in coma, but was expected to survive.

Burglary suspects rounded up

Madaba police Monday announced the arrest, over a two-month period, of 20 suspects in connection with 15 burglaries in different parts of Madaba, according to Colonel Abdullah Oleimat, director of the Madaba Police Department.

Col. Oleimat said the latest arrest took place on Dec. 20, when police apprehended three men aged, 19, 22 and 33, suspected of burglarising a house.

Col. Oleimat told the Jordan Times that the three men broke into the house from a window, stole JD 5,000, jewellery and electrical equipment.

He said that one of the suspects had a police record.

The official said the stolen jewellery was sold at a jewellery shop, whose owner was also arrested.

Some of the stolen goods were recovered, Col. Oleimat said.

He said the authorities also arrested two men in connection with the burglary of another house in Madaba.

The burglars, he said, used a skeleton key to enter homes.

He said the stolen items in this case also included jewellery, money, electronic equipment and other valuables.

Col. Oleimat said that Madaba police apprehended two Zarga residents suspected of burglarising several houses in Madaba.

The official said that both men confessed to burglaries and are awaiting trial.

1993 SSC report says assets totalled JD 583m

AMMAN (Petra) — The net assets of the Social Security Corporation (SSC) amounted to JD 583,167,410 and total investments were JD 560,290,336 at the end of 1993, according to the SSC's recently released statistical report.

The report said investments over the past five years increased from JD 301.6 million in 1989 to JD 575.1 million in 1994.

The investments were divided among the banking, insurance, service, industrial, construction and real estates sectors, according to the report.

The number of retirees at the end of 1993 was 19,803, and the number of non-

Jordanians receiving pensionable salaries from the corporation totalled 289.

The report noted an increase in the number of the SSC-run institutions, saying that their number increased from 5,659 in 1989 to 8,668 in 1994.

The number of insured beneficiaries totalled 724,856 including 191,206 non-Jordanians as at the end of 1993, the report said.

On the labour force in Jordan, the report said it totalled 911,000, up from 851,000 in 1992.

The report noted a drop in the number of non-Jordanian workers from 239,000 in 1991 to 155,000 in 1993.

84,361 students to sit for first part of tawjihi

AMMAN (Petra) — A total of 84,361 students Tuesday will sit for the first part of the general secondary certificate (tawjihi) examination, according to the Ministry of Education.

The exams will be given in 1,130 halls around the Kingdom, and one in Tunisia, according to the ministry's Director of the Examinations

Section, Qassem Khasawneh.

Mr. Khasawneh said that of the total number, 45,068 students are enrolled in the literary stream, 24,590 in the scientific stream, 5,507 in the commercial stream, 2,915 in the agricultural stream, 4,372 in the vocational stream, 1,524 in the nursing stream and 367 are studying hotel management.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

University hosts health research workshop

AMMAN (Petra) — A one-day workshop on health research technology Monday was held at the University of Jordan, with researchers and experts from the university, the Ministry of Health, the Royal Medical Services, the Jordan Medical Association and Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation attending. The workshop, organised by the University of Jordan's Human Resources Development Centre for Health Workers, in cooperation with the Higher Council for Science and Technology, aims to support and upgrade scientific research in the field of health, and to provide data and information for researchers. The workshop also seeks to inform health officials and those interested in health on the latest research and literature in the health and medical technology.

Minister receives Iraqi runner

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Mohammad Adwan Monday received Iraqi long-distance runner Rihab Al Darraji who walked from Baghdad to Amman to offer congratulations to His Majesty King Hussein on the anniversary of his birthday, which falls on Nov. 14. Mr. Darraji, champion of the Arab World in long-distance races, had earlier crossed the almost 1,000-kilometres on foot on the anniversary of the King's accession to the throne. Dr. Adwan presented the tourism shield to the Iraqi athlete in appreciation of his efforts.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

★ Film (in English) entitled "The Life of Leonardo Da Vinci" (part I) (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Khalid Khreis) at Darat Al Funn at 5:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS DISPLAY

★ Bani Hamida Christmas Display with a variety of small gift items at Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman, First Circle, Rainbow Street.

POETRY RECITAL

★ Poetry recital by poet Omar Abu Al Haija at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art on Monday at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of oil paintings by Mohammad Musa at the Phoenix Gallery for Culture and Art.

★ Plastic art exhibition by Laila Kawash at the Royal Cultural Centre.

★ Art exhibition by Ammar Khammash and Fuad Mimi at Instituto Cervantes (the Spanish Cultural Centre).

★ Exhibition of works by Mahmud Obeidi at Darat Al Funn. Also showing an exhibition of portraits by Fahrelnissa Zeid and the exhibition of contemporary Arab artists.

EMBASSY OF INDIA AMMAN

The Embassy of India regrets to inform with profound grief of the sad demise of

Mr. Giani Zail Singh,
former President of India,
on Sunday, 25th December, 1994.

A Condolence Book will remain open at the Embassy premises, Jabal Amman, 1st Circle, on Tuesday (27 December) and Wednesday (28 December) from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FOR ARTLOVERS! EXHIBITION — SALE

Contemporary art works by Arab and foreign artists, drawings, paintings, watercolours, prints and sculptures. Also a collection of Jordanian pots, jars and kalims.

Sale runs until Saturday, Dec. 31st 1994, daily 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

At Mona Saudi's studio - Abdoun Village

Directions: take road opposite gate of American embassy. Road turns to right at end. Take 1st turn left. 2nd house on right between pine trees.

Tel: 829700



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U.S. fails to win release of U.S. pilot by North Korea

SEOUL (R) — Senior U.S. and North Korean officials met at the Korean border Monday to discuss the release of captured American helicopter pilot Bobby Hall but made no progress, the U.S. military said.

"No substantive progress was made and the Korean People's Army would not set a date for Hall's release, maintaining that their investigation into the incident was still continuing," the military said in a statement.

Officer Hall, of Brooksville, Florida, survived the downing of his OH-58 reconnaissance helicopter when it was downed several miles into North Korea's airspace on Dec. 17.

His crewmate, David Hilemon, died in the incident. Officer Hilemon's body was released last Thursday to U.S. Congressman Bill Richardson, after what Mr. Richardson called tense and

heated negotiations with North Korean officials in Pyongyang.

The statement said the U.S. military continued to "press for Hall's immediate return and stressed the border crossing was inadvertent and a routine training flight."

It said the two sides agreed to meet again "in the near future" to continue discussions.

Jim Coles, spokesman for the U.S. military in Seoul, said Monday's contact, which lasted more than one hour at the border village of Panmunjom, was attended by general officers from both sides.

A meeting on this level was last held Wednesday on the eve of the handover of Officer Hilemon's body at Panmunjom, the only crossing point at the tense inter-Korean border.

Mr. Coles gave no further details of Monday's meeting

but said he was still hopeful Officer Hall would be freed shortly. He said he understood the U.S. administration was "using all available channels" for an early release.

The United States had called for Officer Hall to be released for Christmas.

Mr. Richardson said on returning from North Korea with the body of Officer Hilemon that Pyongyang had told him Officer Hall would be freed very soon but had given no assurance this would be by Christmas.

The North said its troops shot the helicopter down.

The Pentagon has said it was unclear why the helicopter came down. It said the helicopter mistakenly crossed the border and the crew thought they were still in South Korea minutes before the craft went down.

Officer Hall was still being questioned about the intru-

sion, which a Northern diplomat in Geneva described as a spy mission.

On Saturday General Gary Luck, commander of the 37,000 U.S. troops in South Korea, sent a letter to North Korean leader Kim Jong-il via Panmunjom expressing regret at the intrusion and pledging to prevent similar incidents in future, a U.S. military official said.

North Korea has said it hoped to resolve the problem on a "humanitarian basis" but has refused to say when Officer Hall would be freed. It said there had to be a thorough investigation.

Washington has said any undue delay in freeing Officer Hall could damage relations. Ties improved following an October deal between the two countries aimed at limiting the potential for any North Korean nuclear weapons programme.

White House intruder charged

WASHINGTON (R) — An unarmed man who tried to climb the north fence of the White House on Christmas Day has been charged with unlawful entry and making felonious threats to arrest officers, a U.S. Secret Service spokesman said Monday.

ABC reported police had visited Lando Bello's home before the White House incident, but would not disclose the nature of those visits.

President Bill Clinton and his family were inside the White House when the Secret Service apprehended the 19-year-old suspect attempting to scale the White House fence, authorities said.

"Somebody grabbed him hanging from the fence," a spokesman for the Secret Service said. "He was not armed and we don't know what he was up to."

The witnesses said the man stopped the climb of his own accord.

Authorities said Mr. Bello was charged with unlawful entry and making felonious threats to the officers who arrested him Sunday.

The Secret Service handles about half a dozen cases of "fence-hoppers" and others trying to get onto the White House grounds each year.



Osbourne Bello (left) is escorted by a Secret Service officer to a waiting car after he was arrested for attempting to climb the fence surrounding the White House. Bello, 19, was unarmed (AFP photo)

but the issue is particularly sensitive now because of a rash of recent incidents.

Last Tuesday, a U.S. Park Police officer shot and killed Marcelino Cornel, 33, a homeless man, when he brandished a large hunting knife in front of the White House and refused to surrender it to authorities.

Earlier this month at least four bullets fired from what the Secret Service said was "a great distance" reached the White House. One of them

went through a window in the state dining room.

On Oct. 29, Francisco Martin Duran, 26, of Colorado was arrested and charged with firing more than two dozen bullets from a semi-automatic assault rifle at the White House.

Six weeks before that Frank Eugene Corder, 38, of Perry Point, Maryland, died when he crashed a small plane on the south lawn of the White House.

Osborne, 'angry young man' of British stage, dies

LONDON (R) — John Osborne, the "angry young man" who transformed British theatre with his blistering social dramas, has died aged 65, hospital officials said Monday.

The playwright, who shot to fame in 1956 with "Look Back in Anger," a blast against the stuffy conventions of English post-war life, died of heart failure in a hospital near his home in Shropshire, central England, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Osborne, a diabetic known for his hard drinking, had been seriously ill in hospital for more than a week, she said.

"Mr. Osborne died of heart failure, on Christmas Eve. His wife Helen was with him," she said.

Osborne's agent, Gordon Dickenson, told the Daily Mail: "We had no hint of any problems until a few weeks ago, but when he went into hospital it became clear that he would not be coming out again."

He added: "It is an enormous loss. He was one of the greatest dramatists and writers."

With "Look Back in Anger" Osborne introduced the genre of the "kitchen sink drama," then a revolutionary way of writing using everyday settings. His hero, Jimmy Porter, became a symbol of educated rebellious youth in the fifties.

John James Osborne was born on Dec. 12, 1929. He revered his father, Thomas, a struggling commercial artist, but hated his mother Nellie Beatrice with a passion.

The family was poor and moved frequently. The young Osborne left to become an actor, but started writing plays at 19.

In 1956 Look Back in Anger, which Osborne scribbled down in a reporter's notepad in just 17 days, shocked London Theatre audiences and alarmed the country. A successful career followed using his anger as the inspiration for hard-hitting drama.

Osborne also wrote The Entertainer, Inadmissible Evidence, and A Patriot for Me. He won an Oscar for best screenplay with the 1964 film Tom Jones.

Richard Burton starred as Jimmy Porter in the film version of Look Back in Anger, and Laurence Olivier took the role of Archie Rice in The Entertainer. But Dejavu, a 1992 sequel to Look Back in Anger, flopped.

Osborne's private life was almost as controversial as his drama. Married five times, he gained a reputation as a hard-drinking, frascable character.

"Who wants to live to 110 anyway if it means not smoking and not drinking?" he asked in a recent interview.

His 1992 autobiography Almost A Gentleman brought him much criticism with its vitriolic comments on colleagues and his ex-wives. He described the suicide of his fourth wife, actress Jill Bennett, as the "coarse posturing of an overheated housemaid."

Author-playwright Sheridan Morley told BBC Radio: "He was wonderfully vindictive. He was savage about his own mother in his memoirs."

Japan Upper House polls scheduled for July

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Tomichi Murayama's unlikely coalition has scheduled elections for Japan's Upper House of parliament on July 23 next year in what could be the first major test of his left-right alliance.

Coalition party officials said Monday that the three partners in the ruling alliance informally decided the date for the nationwide polls after agreeing to reconvene parliament on Jan. 20 for a 150-day regular session.

The Socialists are in an awkward alliance with their one-time foes in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and with the small Sakigake Party. Mr. Murayama came to power in June after his Socialists crossed over from an anti-LDP coalition.

He has repeatedly said he will not call general elections for the more powerful lower house until after the Upper House poll, although he has the power to dissolve the lower house at any time for snap polls.

Half of the seats in the 252-member upper chamber will be up for election. Members serve six-year terms, with polls for half the seats held every three years.

The Upper House polls will also mark the nationwide electoral debut of the New Frontier Party, the country's largest opposition party formed earlier this month in a merger of nine small parties.

Meanwhile, a state intelligence report Monday warned of possible extremist attacks next year when Japan marks the sensitive 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Both left and right-wing elements are likely to step up violent campaigns to seek publicity for their causes as the anniversary approaches, the public security investigation agency said.

"There is the fear of some unruly (rightist) elements taking direct action against government and party leaders," referring to a shooting

incident involving former premier Morihiro Hosokawa, the Justice Ministry's intelligence unit said in an annual security report.

A 52-year-old right-wing activist fired a shot into the ceiling of a hotel lobby as Mr. Hosokawa entered the room last May, in an apparent protest against a public apology he had made for Japan's aggression in the rest of Asia.

The report said Japan's extreme rightists had been angered by a move in parliament to adopt a resolution on the 50th anniversary of the end of the war apologising for the country's militaristic past.

The extremists — who number an estimated 20,900 in divided into about 1,400 groups — also denounce as leftist anti-war propaganda a government plan to build a peace memorial hall in memory of the war dead, the report said.

Mr. Hosokawa, who stepped down in April, was the most articulate of Japanese prime ministers in expressing regret over Japan's occupation of China and other Asian nations, as well as for its acts of aggression during World War II.

Rightists claim that Japan waged a holy war under the command of Emperor Hirohito to establish prosperity and stability in Asia by fighting Western colonial powers. They also accuse government leaders of crumbling under foreign pressure to meekly apologise for Japan's wartime past.

The intelligence agency warned too against possible violence from Japan's militant leftist factions directed at "individual targets, including government officials," to highlight their anti-war and anti-emperor struggle.

"There is the strong possibility of guerrilla-oriented sects resorting to terrorist and guerrilla tactics, which have appealing effects (for them)," on the 50th anniversary of the war, the report said.

Row grows over U.S. Philippines travel advisory

MANILA (R) — A U.S. government travel advisory describing the Philippines as dangerous came under renewed attack Monday, with one legislator saying Manila should recall its ambassador to Washington if the United States fails to withdraw it.

The State Department advisory said American travellers were at risk from homicides, kidnapping, other crimes of violence, confidence games and credit card fraud. It also warned of the risk of violence from leftist and Muslim rebels.

It said travelling away from national roads at night could be very dangerous.

Elas Ople, chairman of the Philippine Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, said in a statement the advisory exaggerates the country's crime problem.

"The Philippine government should file a diplomatic protest and demand the withdrawal of this insulting advisory. And if this proves unavailing, we should recall the Philippine ambassador in Washington," he said.

"This consular information sheet presents a very unbalanced view of the Philippines," Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo said in a statement.

"Our officials have discussed this subject because what we want is even-handedness and fair play."

Press Secretary Jesus Sison said the advisory was unfair and crime in cities like New York and Los Angeles was far worse than in Manila.

Philippine officials have not disputed the truth of the assertions in the advisory but say it fails to present a balanced view.

Dalai Lama joins India to mourn Singh

NEW DELHI (R) — Tibet's exiled spiritual head, the Dalai Lama, joined Indian leaders Monday in paying tribute to former Indian President Zail Singh who died after three weeks in hospital following a car accident.

The government has declared a seven-day official mourning period for Mr. Singh, who died in a government hospital in the northern Chandigarh city Sunday. He was 78.

"I am very saddened to learn of the tragic and sudden demise of India's former

president. In his passing away, the people of Tibet also have lost a good friend," the Dalai Lama said in a statement.

Mr. Singh suffered multiple fractures when his car was hit by a truck on Nov. 29. A government inquiry into the incident, after opposition leaders expressed fears of the possible involvement of Sikh militants, found nothing suspicious.

The Dalai Lama said all Tibetans were offering special prayers for Mr. Singh, who frequently campaigned

for more political freedom in Tibet and against human rights abuse by Chinese troops there.

"(Singh's life) has been the source of inspiration to many people," said the Dalai Lama, who also is a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma and Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao led the country in paying tributes.

They laid wreaths on his coffin after it was flown to New Delhi Monday aboard an Indian Air Force plane.

China lauds 1994 diplomatic successes

BEIJING (AFP) — China Monday hailed its success in facing down Washington over the MFN-human rights issue as the highlight of a year of triumphant foreign policy dealings.

1994 saw China make "major progress in establishing and implementing its diplomatic strategy," the official Xinhua News Agency said, pointing to a series of high-profile overseas visits by senior leaders and a general strengthening of foreign trade and economic ties.

At the same time, Xinhua voiced concern over lingering frictions left from the cold war, especially on the Korean peninsula. It criticised countries which "force their views onto others in handling state-to-state relations" — a clear reference to the United

States. China's diplomatic activity this year was partly based on the principle of "never bending to pressure imposed by any powers or groups of powers in international affairs," it added.

After a long-running dispute, U.S. President Bill Clinton decided in May to delink the renewal of China's most favoured nation (MFN) trade status from human rights.

That victory was won without any concessions being made by China, which had made it clear it would rather risk its MFN status than bow to U.S. pressure over the question of human rights.

Xinhua said Mr. Clinton's decision had marked a turning point in bilateral ties and lead to the strengthening of

economic and trade relations and the restoration of military links.

Turning to Sino-Russian ties, the agency said the signing this year of several accords renouncing military conflict had played "an important role in safeguarding peace in the region and in the world as a whole."

1994 also marked a significant increase in overseas visits by senior leaders, with President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng notching up 17 European and Asian nations between them.

The visits were noticeable for the participation of more and more Chinese business leaders, the agency said, adding that the country's "economic diplomacy had yielded remarkable achievements."

Singapore faces problem of girls going steady with girls

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore faces a growing problem with teenage girls turning to lesbianism, a report said Monday. At least five schools have set rules forbidding girls from mixing with tomboys and having very short haircuts, according to The New Paper tabloid.

The schools took the measures because they were faced with the problem of an increasing number of girls pairing off with girls, it said. "It is a worrying situation with counsellors and psychiatrists warning that these girls may be unable to have normal relationships in future," the tabloid said. It added that more schools were requesting talks on homosexuality. The New Paper cited three youth psychiatrists as saying they were seeing more teenage girls with lesbian tendencies. "This is confirmed by youth counselling agencies," it said. The newspaper said it identified two distinct groups after speaking to about 25 schoolgirls aged between 14 and 18 years having relationships with other girls. One group comprises tomboys who cut their hair short, bandaged their chests, dressed like boys and had very feminine girlfriends. The other group consisted of girl-next-door types from middle-income families. Many were attractive and dressed trendy and wooed by their tomboyish "boyfriends" with expensive presents, dinners and outings to the disco. Vincent Lam, who heads Youth Challenge which arranges for counselling for some of the parents and girls, said: "Our investigation showed that several girls were leading a lesbian lifestyle. Most are from girls' schools and middle-income families."

Other counsellors and psychiatrists said these girls were not born that way but led into it by circumstances or background. "Some could have been treated like sons by their parents. Some could become like that because they are not confident of their femininity," said Sinclair Rogers, who heads Choices, a counselling programme for homosexuals in Singapore. A psychiatrist, who counsels six schoolgirls on this problem, said some of them saw it trendy to lead an alternative lifestyle. "Movies and music personalities like Madonna and K D Lang have made bisexuality or lesbianism hip. And it is normal for teenagers to imitate their idols," the psychiatrist said.

They laid wreaths on his coffin after it was flown to New Delhi Monday aboard an Indian Air Force plane.

for more political freedom in Tibet and against human rights abuse by Chinese troops there.

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COLD SHOWER: A woman pours a pail of cold water over her head in Serebryany Bor park in Moscow, 25 December, on the opening day of the winter swimming season as temperatures began to fall below minus three degree Celsius (AFP photo)

Li Peng arrives in Rangoon to expand friendship

BANGKOK (Agencies) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng arrived in Rangoon Monday for an official visit aimed at sealing his country's warm relationship with isolated army-ruled Burma.

"My current visit is aimed at fully strengthening the good neighbourly and friendly ties between us and expanding our mutually beneficial cooperation," Mr. Li said in an arrival statement broadcast on state-run Radio Rangoon.

The radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, quoted Mr. Li as saying he believed his visit would yield positive results and expand friendship.

"I will exchange views with leaders of Myanmar (Burma) on bilateral relations," Mr. Li was quoted as saying.

Mr. Li and his party will spend three days in Burma, whose junta came to power in 1988 after bloody suppressing pro-democracy protests.

Among those travelling with Mr. Li were state councillor Li Guixian, Minister of Communications Huang Zhendong, Governor He Zhiqiang of Yunnan province which borders Burma, and Deputy Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan.

Mr. Li's formal host will be SLORC's nominal chairman General Than Shwe, who is also prime minister. But his visit is widely seen as reciprocating a high-profile visit to Beijing in September by Bur-

ma's most powerful general, military intelligence chief Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt.

Officials in India and South East Asia, wary of Chinese and Burmese intentions, have said they would watch Mr. Li's visit keenly for signs of growing Chinese influence.

A key fear is that China's growing blue-water navy will gain access to Burma's Indian Ocean naval ports, expanding Beijing's military influence near major international shipping lanes.

But some Rangoon-based diplomats said they felt it was unlikely the independent-minded Burmese — themselves wary of over-reliance on China — would grant such access.

The visit nonetheless comes at a time of deepening security ties between Burma and China, which have pledged a common war against Golden Triangle heroin traffickers whose cross-border activities have thrived during China's 15-year reform era.

Rangoon began buying fighter planes and other arms from Beijing in 1990 and recently bought \$400 million of Chinese helicopters, armoured vehicles, field guns, assault rifles and patrol boats, Jane's Defence Week-

ly said.

The British publication said Burma was expected to use the weapons in a January

offensive against Burmese drug lord Khun Sa, who controls large tracts of land near the Chinese border and maintains his own army.

Burma has been largely shunned by the West since the crushing of nationwide pro-democracy demonstrations in 1988, a year before a remarkably similar crackdown in Beijing in June 1989.

The military government detained hundreds of its opponents, including the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi who is still under house arrest.

China has remained a steadfast supporter of Burma and is its main trading partner and arms supplier.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi, the world's most prominent political prisoner, will be seeing her husband and younger son as she marks her sixth Christmas under house arrest.

Her husband, Oxford academic Michael Aris, arrived in Rangoon Saturday for a holiday reunion, officials said. Her son Kim arrived here a week ago.

It will be the tenth family reunion for the 49-year-old Suu Kyi since she was detained in July 1989 for allegedly endangering national security, she has not been formally charged or tried.

As founder and leader of the National League for Democracy, Mrs. Suu Kyi had challenged the junta that

ruled Burma to return the country to democratic rule.

Her active campaigning for nonviolent change earned her the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize, but failed to persuade the military to give up power.

Her party won a landslide victory in a 1990 general election, but the junta refused to let the winners take their seats.

According to her detention order, only immediate family members are allowed to visit Mrs. Suu Kyi at her lakeside home.

This year, the junta eased the rules to allow her meetings with two outsiders — U.S. Rep. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, and Buddhist missionary monk U Rewata Dharma from England.

Mr. Richardson, accompanied by a U.N. official and an American reporter, met Mrs. Suu Kyi in February. Rewata Dharma paid a visit in August.

Both visitors also met leading members of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, or SLORC, which is the official name of the junta.

Since then, junta leaders have met twice, with Mrs. Suu Kyi, but details of their talks have not been released.

Loebster-eating Italians told — boil 'em in beer

ROME (R) — Italians who squirm at the scream of live lobster boiling in a saucepan are getting some novel advice from fishermen facing an animal rights campaign to save the succulent shellfish from an agonising death. The fishermen say the best way to prevent a lobster suffering is to hammer a nail through its head and then boil it in beer.

Old peasant is hale and hearty on rat diet

SHANGHAI (R) — Eighty-year-old Wu Zhongle can carry 50 kilograms on his back and run as fast as young men in his village. The secret of his good health? Eating rats, apparently.

The Liberation Daily Monday reported that Mr. Wu sells rats for a living and has been eating them for decades, with a preference for fresh ones just caught.

Mr. Wu lays traps in the homes of his native village in Jiangxi province, south China, and collects the catches, sometimes so many that he has to preserve them with salt for sale during the off season.

Man slices off organ

MANILA (AFP) — A man cut off his penis and testicles with a razor, reportedly to fulfill

U.N. insists Bosnia truce taking hold

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officials said Monday the latest ceasefire was taking hold, contradicting Serbian government accusations that Bosnian Serb forces had mounted attacks in the western enclave of Bihać.

Bosnia's Muslim-led government has protested to the United Nations over Serb troop movements and attacks in the enclave and has threatened to retaliate elsewhere in Bosnia unless the United Nations revokes the problem.

The dispute over the Bihać enclave threatened to derail the ceasefire, inspired by the mediation of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, which has slowed fighting across the country since it began Saturday.

Bosnian government leaders said Sunday that talks on a more extensive cessation of hostilities, due by Jan. 1, would not take place until the situation around the town of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the enclave, was settled to their satisfaction.

U.N. officials hope the seven-day ceasefire will pave the way for a four-month cessation of hostilities and a resumption of peace talks aimed at ending the 33-month-old war.

The U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Rose, was due to hold talks with both sides to try to broker an agreement on the comprehensive four-month truce, under which peacekeeping troops would be deployed between the two armies.

United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) spokesman Alexander Ivanke told reporters in Sarajevo that peacekeepers could not verify allegations about Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) troop manoeuvres in Bihać made by Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic.

Mr. Ivanke said the ceasefire in Bosnia was "taking hold and that orders concerning the ceasefire are filtering down to the unit level."

"Yesterday's statement by Dr. Ganic on BSA involvement in the fighting in the Bihać pocket has been taken extremely seriously by UNPROFOR. We have triple checked the situation on the ground and have found no evidence whatsoever of BSA involvement in military activity in that area," he said.

The Croatian Serbs and their rebel Muslim allies have not signed the current ceasefire.

fire agreed between the Bosnian Serbs and the Sarajevo government.

Government troops have suffered serious setbacks in the past month in fighting in the Bihać enclave, with Serb forces surrounding Bihać town and Croatian Serb and allied rebel Muslims recently capturing the town of Velika Kladusa.

The United Nations said there was some fighting Sunday around Velika Kladusa, with nine detonations reported east of the town along with sporadic small-arms and machinegun fire.

But Mr. Ivanke said that even the Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim forces were "curtailing their activities" in the Velika Kladusa area.

U.N. relief efforts for the enclave were still facing harassment and delays by Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim forces controlling northern access roads, said Kris Janowski, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Germany also pledged to contribute six regular Tornados, two electronic surveillance jets, up to 12 transport planes, minesweepers and patrol boats and earmarked a field hospital and two mobile medical units.

It would be Germany's first

foreign military venture since World War II.

Meanwhile, a group of United Nations peacekeeping troops from Malaysia en route to Sarajevo were quarantined in the port city of Ancona, Italy Monday after one of them was diagnosed with meningitis, local government officials said.

Fabio Costantini, a local Interior Ministry official, said one of the 122 soldiers who arrived from Kuala Lumpur Saturday was found to have bacterial meningitis.

He told Reuters the soldier was improving and the troops would be allowed to leave Italy later Monday if no other meningitis cases were discovered.

Ancona is a jumping-off point for relief supplies to Bosnia.

Meningitis, an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain, is usually caused by bacteria or viruses and is treated with antibiotics. The patient usually recovers rapidly.

Malaysia has 1,600 peacekeeping troops in Bosnia and earlier this month agreed to send nearly 400 more to boost the United Nations Protection Force mission there.



Bosnian Serb soldiers cross the River Una near Bihać. The nationwide ceasefire signed by Bosnians and Bosnian Serbs came into effect and according to U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reports it was observed everywhere (AFP photo)

Pakistan closes Indian consulate, expels diplomat

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan, sharply escalating a dispute with its rival India, closed the Indian consulate in Karachi Monday, accusing India of orchestrating "acts of terrorism and violence" in its biggest city.

The move came only hours after Islamabad ordered the expulsion of an Indian diplomat, in a tit-for-tat trade in spying accusations with New Delhi.

Foreign Secretary Nandini Shekh said India had been asked to close its consulate-general in Karachi and withdraw its personnel there within 10 days.

The decision was taken because of Indian "involvement" in unrest in Karachi, where hundreds of people have died this year in violence linked to factional, sectarian and ethnic problems, he said.

"We have been constrained to take this decision because of clear and fresh evidence of India's involvement in the planning, instigation and execution of acts of terrorism and violence in Karachi," he said.

Mr. Shekh also said Indian diplomats for the

"propagation of disaffection and propaganda against the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan."

The Indian High Commissioner (ambassador) in Islamabad, S. K. Lamba, who was informed of the decision during an earlier meeting with Mr. Shekh, rejected the Pakistani allegations, the foreign secretary said in reply to a question.

Earlier Sunday, Pakistan expelled Deepak Thakur, an assistant visa attaché at the Indian High Commission, for suspected espionage.

Mr. Thakur was declared persona non grata for "activities incompatible with his (diplomatic) status," the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said Monday, using the phrase that traditionally refers to spying.

Pakistan Sunday asked the Indian government to recall the diplomat within 10 days, the news agency said, quoting Foreign Office sources.

There was no immediate official reaction from New Delhi, where government offices were closed in mourning for former President Zail Singh, who died Sunday.

The expulsion order came only a day after Indian police said Shapal Khan, an assistant at the Pakistani embassy in Delhi, was detained for two hours Saturday after allegedly receiving secret documents from a civilian employee of the Indian Navy.

Mr. Khan could not be interrogated because he had diplomatic status, Delhi police said. The arrested Indian was identified as K.K. Parasuram, 56, an assistant with the navy's directorate of weapons, who was arrested after accepting 7,500 rupees (\$250) for the documents.

Mutual hostility has marred relations between predominantly Hindu India and mainly Muslim Pakistan since their independence from Britain in 1947. The two rivals have fought three wars, two of them over the partitioned area of Kashmir.

Pakistan expelled another Indian diplomat, J.J. Singh, from the Karachi consulate on spying charges in late August. A month earlier, the two countries carried out a tit-for-tat arrest of two embassy officials and then expelled them.

More recently, Indian officials have alleged Pakistani involvement — strongly denied — in an outbreak of plague in western India and the loss of secret data from a rocket project.

On the Pakistani side, officials at the weekend made dark insinuations about an Indian role in the ethnic violence that has held Karachi in its grip.

"No amount of terrorism being committed by India can deter Pakistan from pursuing the path of development," Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto told a function in Karachi Sunday.

More than 700 people have died this year in clashes between rival factions of the Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) representing the Urdu-speaking migrants who settled in southern Sindh after the sub-continent's partition, and militants from the Sunni and Shiite Muslim sects.

An official spokesman Friday said the gruesome murder of four paramilitary rangers in Karachi last week "substantiated apprehensions that there is a foreign hand behind the continuation of violence" in the port city.

Politicians avoid telephones as Rao plans cabinet

NEW DELHI (R) — Leaders of India's ruling Congress Party waited Monday for a cabinet reshuffle but newspapers said Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao might delay the move for a week.

They said a seven-day state mourning period for former President Zail Singh, who died Sunday, had given Mr. Rao more time to plan the reshuffle after his cabinet was plunged into crisis by five resignations in two weeks.

Some politicians said a new cabinet could be sworn in earlier, possibly after Mr. Singh's cremation Tuesday.

The capital was full of rumours Monday about the planned reshuffle, part of Mr. Rao's move to check a revolt in the ruling party, but politicians were unwilling to discuss the issue on their telephones.

The Times Of India newspaper said Monday that government intelligence agencies were tapping the telephones of senior politicians and journalists after Mr. Rao's main rival Arjun Singh resigned as human resource minister Saturday and sparked a crisis for Congress.

"A large number of disident congressmen, high-profile opposition leaders, journalists and bureaucrats have stopped using their telephones since the current political crisis began," the Times said in a front-page report.

"Most of them suspect that their telephones are tapped," it said. It quoted senior

intelligence and security officers as saying there was "nothing new in this since telephones of politicians, bureaucrats and some journalists are tapped from time to time."

Politicians would not discuss on the telephone Mr. Singh's resignation or Mr. Rao's handling of the move.

"If you want my opinion please come and meet me, we can't discuss this on the phone," said Abdul Rahman Antulay, former chief minister of western Maharashtra state and Congress Party deputy. His colleagues were equally cautious.

An 1885 law under British rule allows the Indian government to tap telephones "in the interest of maintaining the sovereignty, and integrity of India."

Most of Mr. Rao's cabinet colleagues rallied behind him after Arjun Singh launched a sharp attack on his policies, accusing Mr. Rao of a cover-up in a \$1.3 billion banks and securities scandal, the nation's biggest financial scam.

During the 1992 scandal, bankers and brokers colluded to siphon funds, mainly from government securities, to the then-booming Bombay Stock Exchange.

Mr. Singh also accused Mr. Rao of impeding a government inquiry into the assassination of former Premier Rajiv Gandhi, saying the prime minister wanted to wind up a panel set up to investigate a possible conspiracy behind the murder.

Mr. Gandhi was killed by a woman suicide bomber while campaigning in the 1991 general elections which eventually brought Mr. Rao to power.

Congress leaders said the party was heading for a split between Rao loyalists and supporters of Mr. Gandhi's charismatic but reclusive Italian-born widow Sonia Gandhi.

Mr. Singh's supporters said he had gained Sonia Gandhi's backing for his challenge to Mr. Rao's leadership. Some newspapers said Mrs. Gandhi had seen Mr. Singh's resignation letter even before it was forwarded to Mr. Rao.

Meanwhile, India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), preparing for key state elections in February, said Monday it would campaign against giving foreign multinationals a free hand in the economy.

BJP President Lal Krishan Advani said his party would also call for a slowdown in India's economic globalisation.

"We will oppose a free entry to multinationals," Mr. Advani told Reuters. "This is not an election promise but a commitment to fight the threat to our security, our self-sufficiency."

"We are not for reversing the economic reforms, but we should first look at our domestic industry and economy before seeking further investments from outside."

But the BJP's parent group, the secretive Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), National Volunteers Corps) has already sent out activists preaching against the evils of foreign consumer goods.

Mr. Advani said the BJP, which made gains in recent state polls in four states, would highlight corruption — mainly the nation's worst financial scandal in 1992 and the sugar import muddle.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Rao's Congress Party suffered a stinging setback in three of the four states that went to polls.

Another setback in the February polls would hit Congress's chances in general elections due in mid-1996.

Dramatic economic reforms introduced by Mr. Rao three years ago have scrapped many Socialist bureaucratic controls.

But the electoral rout has sent Congress leaders looking for ways to ease their impact on the poor. There have been calls for populist steps to cut prices of food and other essentials.

"If we are voted to power we will ensure that local industries are allowed to emerge as stronger entities and the pace of inflow of foreign investments in consumer industries is more measured," Mr. Advani said.

Several multinationals like Sony, Coca-Cola, Ford and Kellogg's have decided to set up shop in India.

But the BJP's parent group, the secretive Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), National Volunteers Corps) has already sent out activists preaching against the evils of foreign consumer goods.

Burundi premier refuses to quit in crisis

BUJUMBURA (Agence) — Burundi's prime minister has vowed to stay in office to save his country, raising hopes that a political crisis in the central African nation can be resolved without a bloodbath like the one in neighbouring Rwanda.

In a televised address Sunday night, Prime Minister Anatole Kanyemveto said with the leadership of his mainly Tutsi opposition party, UPRONA (Union for National Progress).

The party had announced Saturday that it was calling for the coalition government dominated by the Hutu Burundi Front for Democracy (FRODEBU) in protest against the death of a new speaker of parliament.

"It is not advisable for the government to resign. That would be to start the clock with something even worse," Mr. Kanyemveto said.

"We have chosen to have conscience to save the Burundian nation before any other consideration. We remain loyal to UPRONA," he said.

not the right moment to resign," he said.

There was no firm word on whether the five UPRONA ministers in the government had decided to resign.

Burundi's Tutsi-dominated army is strictly enforcing a curfew in the capital Bujumbura imposed last week after about 30 people died in fighting, ethnic killings.

Violence lessened sharply over the Christmas weekend because of the 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. (17h-00h GMT) curfew.

Burundi, with the same ethnic make-up as its neighbour Rwanda, has been in turmoil since the country's first democratically elected president, a Hutu, was assassinated by Tutsi soldiers last year.

But so far it has avoided the genocidal scale of killings witnessed earlier this year in Rwanda, where up to a million people are estimated to have died.

Burundi's Hutu president, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, told the nation in a broadcast Saturday night that a solution

had been found to the political crisis.

But he gave no details on how he would defuse UPRONA's anger over the election on Dec. 1 of Jean Minani as parliamentary speaker.

The opposition party says Mr. Minani incited Hutus to kill Tutsis last year.

A senior United Nations official told Reuters Sunday that FRODEBU had "informally" agreed to drop Mr. Minani from the parliamentary post, second only to the head of state under Burundi's constitution.

In return, UPRONA would restore its backing to the coalition.

But the reported deal had not been officially confirmed by Monday.

Meanwhile, a former Hutu minister belonging to a Tutsi-led opposition party was murdered at his home here Saturday, his entourage said Monday.

On Sunday, state radio had presented the death of Ladislas Barutwanayo, a former transport minister, as an accident.

But his entourage said Monday that Mr. Barutwanayo, a member of the Tutsi-led UPRONA, had been assassinated at his home by a lone gunman.

Mr. Barutwanayo is the brother of the junior minister for cooperation, Luc Rukingama.

If confirmed the Barutwanayo slaying would be the latest in a series of murders or attempted murders of leading politicians since the start of the year.

Meanwhile, one person was killed and three injured in ethnic clashes Saturday night in Gitega.

The clashes in Gitega were said to be the most serious outbreak of violence there since the 1993 massacres which followed the assassination of the country's first Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye.

According to the hospital's director Dr. Tharcisse Ndayizeye, who was called out to the scene, a grenade was thrown at a house in the Magarama district.

Regional candidates to sweep Uzbek elections

TASHKENT (R) — Uzbekistan's first parliamentary election since independence looked set Monday to return a large majority of regionally-backed candidates to power, leaving the two main parties falling far short of their expectations.

No official figures were available by mid-afternoon the day after the poll, but a spokesman from the ruling Democratic Party said unofficial returns showed his party would win only around 30 per cent of places in the new 250-seat parliament.

Figures from the Democratic Party — the former communists — showed the pro-business Fatherland Progress Party taking five per cent of the seats.

Regional government nominees — four-fifths of whom are Democrats — were expected to win the other seats outright.

The election commission was due to hold a news conference later Monday to publish initial figures, but unofficial results are only expected in the next few days.

Some foreign election observers criticised how the election had been organised, pointing to irregularities such as multiple voting by heads of families and a lack of ballot box security.

"We should give them the benefit of the doubt, but I will not say that this election was free, fair and democratic," Jacques Rousselier, a representative from the

Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe, told Reuters.

"This was a classic Soviet-style election without any concrete sign of improvement," Mr. Rousselier, who coordinated a group of foreign election observers, added.

He said that multiple voting had raised the turnout to sufficient levels to enable leading candidates to win the absolute majority of votes needed to gain election.

Observers also criticised the close vetting of candidates by the government of President Islam Karimov and the lack of a lively debate in the run-up to the elections in a country where the press is under tight state control.

Mr. Rousselier cited the sudden removal from the ticket of the opposition Fatherland Progress Party of banker Rustam Usmanov after Mr. Usmanov contradicted government policy by calling for dual citizenship for minority Russians.

"We suspect there have been a few Usmanov-type cases," he said.

Mr. Karimov himself Sunday said he hoped the election would help Uzbekistan gain acceptance abroad "as a society that is transforming to democracy."

"Those who are going to be elected are going to play an important role in realising our transition to a market economy," Mr. Karimov told reporters.

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Vision that works

WHILE THE world prepares for the end of another year in the last decade of the 20th century, the Arab World seems at best to be at a standstill if not going backwards. Communal strife, widespread corruption, absolute rule, abuse of human rights, are but a few of the characteristics of present day Arab politics.

Unity, the catch word that in the last four decades was used to mesmerise the masses is today no more than an abstract concept belonging more to history than reality.

What the Arab states "achieved" in the past four decades is no more than elaborate networks of roads and concrete buildings in cities that only house directionless people who have nearly lost all sense of purpose.

Except for one or two spots in the Arab World darkness or tyranny is what predominates the scene. That is why His Majesty King Hussein wants Jordan to become a shining light upon others in this region. Jordan could and should provide a model for other Arabs to look up to and emulate. That is one important reason why this country chose to make peace with Israel for because of war and the "enemy" from without the Arabs were plagued by the enemy from within.

Jordan, leadership and people, know very well, as do others, that without democracy, popular participation and political pluralism, respect of human rights, freedom of expression and belief, and clean and efficient government, there can be no future for the Arabs among the nations.

The role of the Fourth Estate, the press, in this regard is crucial. Not only does the media inform, as His Majesty pointed out yesterday as on so many occasions before, it also enlightens and leads public opinion.

Jordan and its intellectuals have nothing to fear from stepping ahead of those who prefer to stay where they are. The masses are eager for freedom, for democracy, for clean government and for participation. Jordan might be small in size and population. It might also be hampered by lack of economic and financial resources, but it sure does not lack an enlightened, progressive and visionary leadership that can show the way.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Rai Arabic daily Monday expressed regret that the United Nations has failed to play a meaningful role in halting the massacre of the Bosnian people at the hands of the Serbs. The Serbs have made a mockery of international principles and have gone ahead with their ethnic cleansing of the Bosnians under the banner of humanitarian or other considerations, said the paper. "What ever has been said about respect of human rights under the so called new world order is nothing but a big lie while the world continues to witness injustice, massacres and violations of human rights in former Yugoslavia, added the paper. It is hoped however that the ceasefire that took hold two days ago will continue, opening the way for the two sides to resort to reason and peaceful dialogue with or without the help of the United Nations, said the paper. The paper added that if Washington and its European allies wished they could stop the war immediately and prevent further atrocities which have lasted for three years.

Ahmad Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily, Monday urged the Ministry of Supply to prevent dairy processing factories, from raising the prices of yogurt and labaneh, something which they have been threatening to do under the pretext that they were not making any profit from their business. In fact these factories have been making a lot of profit by buying the locally produced milk at a relatively cheap price and through selling their products at fairly high price, said the writer. Every year these dairy firms have been reporting profit despite the rise in the price of the plastic containers and other inputs required for the business, noted the writer. The annual reports about the dairy firms operations expose the lies of the factories' management who are claiming that they have been operating at a loss, he added. Indeed some of these factories have been expanding their operations in recent years and installing modern machinery and laying off workers in the process, he added. The writer urged the Ministry of Supply to come to the aid of the consumers and protect the interests of the low income families from the greed of factory owners.

The View from Fourth Circle

The balance sheet of peace is problematic

By Rami G. Khouri

TWO MONTHS after the signing of the Jordan-Israel peace agreement, the full political ramifications of that event are becoming clearer. Supporters and opponents of the treaty have both made their viewpoints known, with the supporters tending to use the state-owned media to propagate their views and the opponents relying more on private gatherings and personal meetings to explain their objections.

A preliminary assessment of events during the past two months suggests that the negative domestic and regional consequences of the peace accord have been as great as the positive ones. In a relatively small country such as ours that values the concepts of personal courage, diplomatic honesty, national unity and political democratisation, it seems to me imperative that we discuss the interim balance sheet of the peace treaty in a manner that would further promote these four attributes that are often and rightly associated with Jordan and its leadership. I would make several points in this regard.

Short-term damage control should be a top national priority today in view of the damage that was done to aspects of Jordan's credibility in two ways: the lack of democratic consultation and debate among all Jordanians and their constitutional parliamentary representatives during the negotiating process, and the fact that we went ahead and signed a separate peace accord after spending the last several decades resolutely affirming that we would never do such a thing. The damage that has occurred is real but not catastrophic; the more serious danger might arise from allowing recent political tendencies to perpetuate themselves, especially the tendency to muffle public debate about major political issues.

The resignation of Senator Ahmad Obeidat, in this respect, is a bad sign, a political act somehow incongruous with and unworthy of our contemporary Jordanian inclination to administer greater, rather than lesser, doses of democratisation. Why should a senator resign if he disagrees with aspects of the government's policy? Is it not his job to speak honestly about proposed government policies? What are the meaning, credibility and value of our Senate and our entire parliamentary process if a respected scion of the Jordanian political establishment — and the godfather of the National Charter — must pay the heavy price of resignation for honestly expressing his views? If a person of Ahmad Obeidat's stature cannot survive political dissent, what is the fate of smaller fish?

One way to improve the situation quickly would be to assure that the process of political analysis and debate henceforth is a public, open process that allows all viewpoints to be heard, no matter how much some of those viewpoints might run against the prevalent government position or the sacred cows of the opposition. The government, for its part, has much work to do to make up for its thunderously lowkey and often incompetent explanation of why we signed a separate peace accord, what

are our expectations, and how we plan to deal with the regional diplomatic repercussions.

Our government is composed of honest, diligent public servants who do their best, but they must come to terms with the fact that sometimes their best is not good enough to mobilise large-scale public support for their political policies, or to assuage public concerns and fears about those policies. It is a sad comment on our political culture that more time, money, effort and ingenuity have probably been spent by Amman hotels on promoting new year's eve parties with belly dancers, than have been expended by the executive branch of government in explaining to the Jordanian people the political causes, dynamics and expectations of the peace accord with Israel.

It would be a huge mistake for the government and the political establishment to disregard the nature and depth of the public's scepticism with the peace treaty. In fact, it would be a source of strength for the government to squarely address and accept the opposition that exists in the country, and to do two things with it: a) to understand the reasons for it, and to be sensitive to those reasons in future implementation of the peace accord or in other bilateral relations with Israel, and b) to make sure that the shortcomings of the past are not perpetuated in the future — namely, that future policy decisions are made only after thorough political consultation and public debate.

Some people react to ideas such as these by invoking the "Gods of national unity", by claiming that because Jordan is a small, delicate, vulnerable country living in a dangerous neighbourhood we must avoid domestic disagreements at all costs and maintain a unified posture in our dealings with the rest of the world. I would have thought that the pillar of national unity had to be national honesty, and that the bedrock of national composure and stability had to be treaty one another as intelligent, dignified human beings who have the ability to use their minds and the right to express their thoughts in an atmosphere of affection and pride for all that Jordan represents. The gods of national unity would probably be pleased to see more, rather than less, public debate and participation when it comes to formulating policy. Is national unity a club with which to beat down personal freedoms and national self-confidence and composure?

I raise these issues now for several reasons, but mainly because we can learn much from the experiences of the last two years as we continue to engage in the process of making peace with Israel and of developing relations with our Arab neighbours and with the world's powers. Jordan will not disappear or suffer badly if future national strategic decisions are made in the same way that they were made during the recent peace negotiations. Yet, Jordan and its people, would gain considerably if future political steps were made on the basis of a more open and impressive national debate than we have enjoyed to date on the peace

issue.

We have nothing to fear from honest debate among our sons and daughters. We are a well educated, serene, historically sensitive and appreciative citizenry that cares only for the best interest of our country, our people and our national honour. Those interests would be best served henceforth, for example, by a more compelling debate than we have had to date about the nature, dangers and benefits of normalisation with Israel. Many people who did not have a chance to influence the debate about the peace accord itself are now lining up to fight normalisation. A similar situation exists vis-a-vis Jordanian-Palestinian relations, which have been passing through another rough patch recently, or vis-a-vis relations with the United States.

The manner in which these and other important issues are handled will have a big impact on Jordan in the near future, because it will send a powerful signal to this and future generations of Jordanians about the nature of political governance in our country and the quality of national life that our citizenry should expect. If the government continues to make the major decisions on its own and minimises public discussions through political institutions and the state-owned electronic media, this would only promote greater irritation and opposition among a large number of Jordanians who had rather anticipated ending this century and this millennium in a mode of greater political liberalisation and personal dignity.

The question in the end is not about whether the peace treaty will be implemented, because this appears certain. The question is not about Israel; it is about Jordan and our own sense of confidence in our own people. In the context of a fast changing global and regional scene, the big question is whether we are moving forwards or backwards in the quality of our political culture. The balance sheet of Jordan today and four years ago, for example, is problematic. Today we have internal dissatisfaction among many Jordanians who feel they are being rushed into a peace process and normalisation, coupled with erratic relations with virtually all of our Arab neighbours, and apparently improving relations with Israel and the United States. Four years ago, relations with the U.S. and Israel were not so good, but Jordan was respected and admired by hundreds of millions of people throughout the Arab World who saw us as a symbol of hope for a better future — a future in which freedom, stability and progress emanated from the convictions and commitments of our own people, because our own people looked around them in the Middle East and saw a frightening collection of autocratic, dependent police states, but they looked inside Jordan and saw the spirit of human freedom, dignity and humane political governance beckoning them.

America's year in crime enough to scare anyone

By Arthur Spiegelman
Reporter

NEW YORK — The best mystery writers in America could not top the real crime news of 1994.

It was the year of the O.J. Simpson case and the slow speed car chase watched by so many people live on television that a new record was set for pizza home deliveries.

It was the year when Lorena Bobbitt failed to go to jail for cutting off her husband's penis, and a mother drowned her two young children sending a nation into shock.

It was a year of baby-faced teen killers, sex fiends and carjackers, a time when America seemed ready to scare itself to death over crime.

The line between entertainment and tragedy blurred as debates raged over whether former American football star Simpson murdered his wife, whether Michael Jackson sexually abused young boys and whether Tonya Harding was enough of a bad sport to dispatch hitmen to beat up Nancy Kerrigan, her main rival for a Olympic figure skating gold medal. (Alas, she was).

Some days the nightly news seemed to be a TV movie of the week. One ray of sunshine was that no foreign tourist was murdered in Florida this year, after nine were killed in 1993.

Months of sensational crime shoved politics off the front pages and when the midterm elections were held, it came as no surprise that voters opted for capital punishment, more prisons and longer jail terms.

"Three strikes and you're out" became the new motto of an enraged citizenry and for the first time in U.S. history, as several states proposed life sentences for criminals convicted for a third time. The prison population exceeded one million.

Even worse, authorities reported a disturbing trend of the 1990s — a person was now more likely to be killed by a stranger than a family member or an acquaintance.

A study found that Americans glued to their television sets were likely to believe crime was rising dramatically when someone who kept the "boob tube" switched off. The Federal Bureau of Investigation said that violent crime

was, in fact, decreasing as were crimes against property. Tell that to Mario Cuomo, the three-term governor of New York, who sought a fourth term. He was defeated by an opponent who promised to restore the death penalty to New York as well as cut taxes as soon as he took office.

It was also the year when the plea of guilty with an explanation reached new heights — some would say of absurdity.

Two Los Angeles juries deadlocked on whether to convict the Menendez brothers, Eric and Lyle, who admitted killing their parents because dad sexually abused them.

Lawyers for Colin Ferguson, a black man accused of murdering six people and wounding 19 others in a racially motivated attack on Long Island railroad commuters, said they would use "black rage" as a means of explaining his actions.

Mr. Ferguson fired the lawyers and is acting as his own lawyer. Courtroom observers said he seems to be taking his cues from hours of watching television lawyer Perry Mason.

Perhaps the oddest case of guilty with an explanation was the one offered by former Minister Paul Hill who killed an abortion doctor and his companion in Pensacola, Florida, and claimed it was justifiable homicide because they were taking the lives of the unborn. Mr. Hill was sentenced to Florida's electric chair for the shotgun shootings.

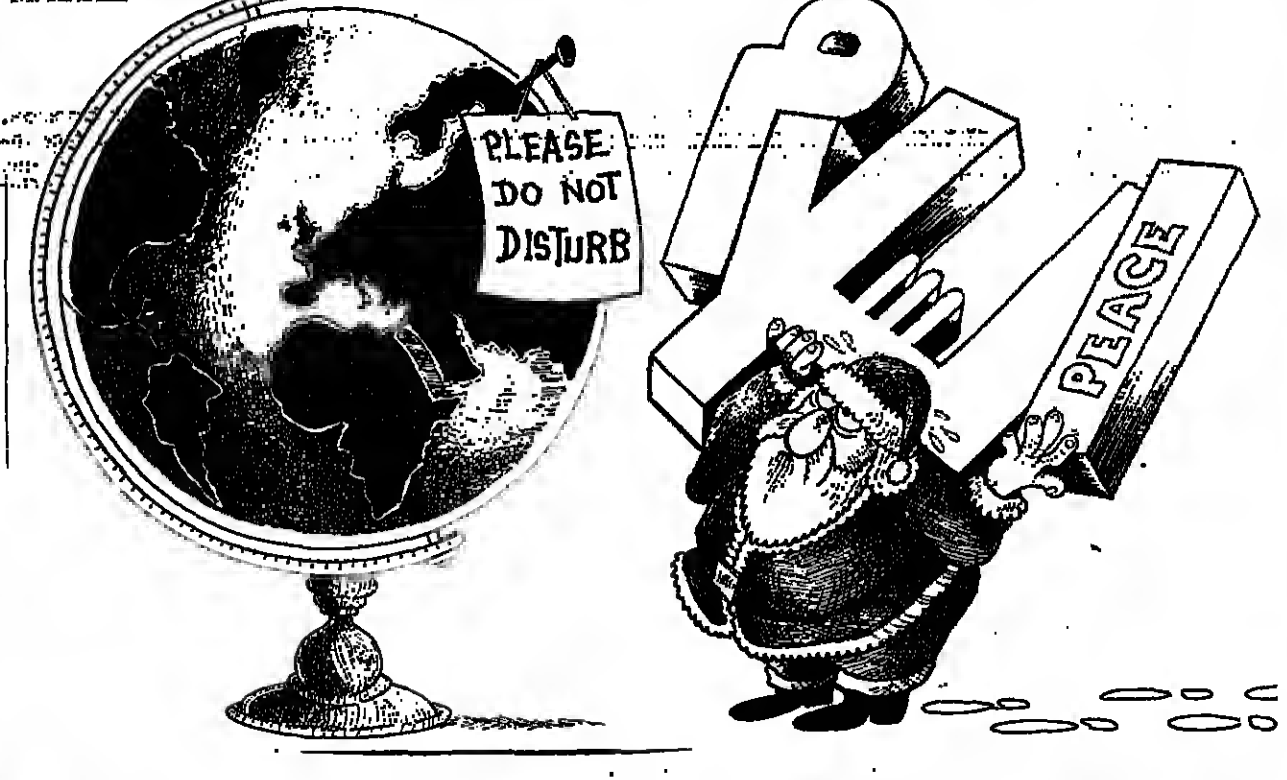
Two of the country's most notorious serial killers also met their end in 1994. John Wayne Gacey, who murdered 33 men, was executed, giving a boost to the price of his clown painting because supply would now be limited.

Even prison couldn't hide Jeffrey Dahmer, the confessed killer of 13 young men and boys was beaten to death in a Wisconsin prison along with a fellow inmate. He was 34.

The alleged killer was a prisoner who allegedly told authorities he acted alone under the "will of God."

A suicidal pilot crashed his plane into the back of the White House just below President Clinton's bedroom while a would-be assassin sprayed the front of the mansion with automatic fire from a Chinese-made rifle.

M. KAHIL



Arab Christians still leave the holy land

By John West
Reporter

JIFFNA, West Bank — A hush lingers over leafy lanes and quarried stone houses of this picturesque village at midday, testament to thousands of Christians who have left the holy land in search of a better life.

The ruins of a Byzantine church stand in the middle, an impressive monument to a Christian presence stretching back at least 1,000 years.

Only about 700 people are left in Jiffna from a population of 3,000 a generation ago and Catholic parish priest Ibrahim Hijazin fears the community might die, as others have in villages across the West Bank.

Thousands of foreign pilgrims flock at Christmas to Jerusalem and Bethlehem where Christ was born. But with each passing year, fewer and fewer of the local Christians — Palestinian Christians — are around to join them.

"There are hardly any Christians left any more. They left because of the very difficult situation. Then what will the holy land be without Christians? Just a museum," Father Hijazin said.

Palestinian Christians began migrating more than a century ago, fleeing poverty in the Ottoman empire for a West that welcomed them far more readily than their Muslim countrymen.

Those early migrations eased the path for Christians to leave and join relatives at each fresh turn of the Middle

East conflict — when Israel was born in 1949, the Arab-Israeli wars that followed and the Palestinian uprising of the late 1980s.

For all the world-grabbing headlines, PLO-Israeli peace moves have yet to reverse the trend. Most Palestinians see the political future as unresolved and the economic future as grim.

Khaled Taqtaq is joining his wife and children in Washington for Christmas. He thinks of moving there for good. An eye doctor, he says he can earn 10 times as much in the United States, where his son has already decided to settle down.

"Last time he came home he must have seen something really horrendous with all the violence. He said, 'I'm sorry, I don't think this is for me. And I see his point,' Dr. Taqtaq said.

"I hate to talk about it but I might migrate too," he said.

In the West Bank and Gaza, Christians are now just three per cent of the population although they are nearly seven per cent of Palestinians worldwide. There are fewer than 10,000 Christians left in Jerusalem, down from 28,000 in 1945.

Bethlehem, Christ's birthplace, became a majority-Muslim city of the first time under Israel's 27-year-old occupation.

Jiffna's old people recall when street buzzed with life. Aziz Mosaheb, 92, lay on a bed next to a gas heater, alone while his wife visited their three children in the

United States.

"They went to look for work. The infidels set everyone back so much here," he said.

Few of the young are committed to staying.

In front of his family, 17-year-old Ibrahim Mansour said he would stay in the land of his forefathers. But later, on his own, he was franker. "Look at this place. It's good for nothing," he said, looking around the deserted village square.

Palestinian Christians complain when visiting pilgrims equate the holy land with Israel and ignore Arab Christians.

For many Christian fundamentalists, Jews are God's chosen people, Israel's creation was foretold in the Bible, and the Arabs — whether Muslim or Christian — are a nuisance.

"The old and the New Testaments are absolutely clear that in the end time the Jews were to come back to their land and I with an Arab wife know that the Arabs have 614 times more territory," said Jan Willem van den Hoeve of the International Christian Embassy, which rallies support for Israel.

"Even in a human way I don't have any difficulty to look the Arabs in the face and say you have 614 times more than this little country which God promised to his people," he added.

The rise of Muslim militant groups like Hamas are a new

worry for Palestinian Christians, clashing traditionally strong ties with their Muslim compatriots and sparking more migration.

Christians played prominent roles in the guerrilla struggle against Israel and held top jobs in PLO head Yasser Arafat's new self-rule authority.

Married to a Christian, Mr. Arafat pays respect to Christians as well as Muslim feelings for Jerusalem in public speeches.

Christians say Muslim fundamentalism is helping create a menacing atmosphere.

"Sometimes, very subtly, you feel you're being watched as an outsider, to see how you behave. It's a very strange feeling to have in the country where you were born and bred," Dr. Taqtaq said.

His parish priest, Canon Naim Ateeq, tries to persuade a dwindling parish to stay put, whatever the hardships.

"This is our land. This is where God placed us. We are the Christian community that has lived here for 2,000 years since the apostles. We should not abandon this place," he said.

He and many others believe only real peace between Israel and the Arabs will stop Christians leaving and bring them back.

"If people begin to recognise that things have changed, that they can live in dignity, as human beings, then I think many of them will come back," Dr. Ateeq said.

كثيرا ما لا أحد

Bahrain says 'foreign group' behind violence

BAHRAIN (AP) — The prime minister says that this month's wave of street riots was instigated by foreign "troublemakers" and praised those Bahrainis who did not join the protests.

Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa's allegation, reported Monday in local newspapers, mentioned no country as responsible for the deadly disturbances.

However, a Kuwaiti newspaper reported that the riots have been linked to Iran and the Iranian-backed Muslim fundamentalist group Hizbollah based in Lebanon.

"A group spurred from abroad tried to spread riots and anarchy and create confusion on the Bahrain street to undermine the mantle of tranquility and security and the fraternity of one family of the Bahrain society," Sheikh Khalifa said.

The prime minister, a brother of the emir, Sheikh Ali Bin Salman Al Khalifa, told a meeting of businessmen over the weekend that the riots subsided because Bahrainis refused to believe "malicious rumours."

"They aborted the attempt of the troublemakers and those behind them from spreading the flames of sedition, tampering with the country's achievements and threatening its stability," the prime minister said.

The riots were triggered by the Dec. 5 arrest of a 29-year-old Shiite Muslim preacher, Sheikh Ali Salman, on charges of plotting to destabilise the country.

Sheikh Salman had demanded more democracy and more jobs for the Shiites, who are believed to make up the majority of the half-million inhabitants of the island ruled by a royal family of the rival Sunni branch of Islam.

Clashes between stone-throwing protesters and riot squads raged for two weeks, mainly in poorer Shiite neighbourhoods of this island, a centre for offshore banking and trade in the oil-rich Gulf.

Opposition groups, estimated up to nine people were killed and hundreds arrested. The government says one policeman died. The violence appeared to have abated over the weekend.

In a report from Bahrain, Al Siyassah daily of Kuwait quoted anonymous security sources as blaming an opposition group called the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain for instigating the violence.

The newspaper said its leader, Mohammad Ali Mahfouz, lives in Beirut's southern suburbs and receives orders from Tehran through Hizbollah, whose guerrillas are fighting an Israeli alliance in South Lebanon.

The newspaper also said a number of people in Bahrain were arrested for making telephone calls abroad and requesting weapons and explosives to use in the disturbances. It was not known if the people were connected to Mr. Mahfouz's group.

Bahrain has accused Iran's state-run media of exaggerating the riots and recalled its ambassador from Tehran last week for consultations.

Iranian media have described the unrest as "a popular uprising that aims at the return of democracy and parliamentary life in the country."

In 1981, Bahrain arrested more than 50 people charged with an Iranian-backed attempt to topple the government.

Russia gains, Germany loses, America should stay

By Brian Beedham

LONDON — Let us try a bit of neorealpolitik. It is time to ask some hard-nosed questions about the past month's balance-of-power manoeuvrings in and around Europe.

This will distress those who thought that after the cold war, powers no longer manoeuvred and neorealpolitik could be lowered into the grave. Alas, events have shown otherwise. The world stays harshly real: the calculations of international power are as convoluted as ever; hard-nosed questions are still needed.

The chief contenders in today's neorealpolitik are Russia, once again in vigorous pursuit of familiar Russian interests despite its economic and social fragility; Germany, back in its old pre-cold war position as the power in the middle of Europe; the non-German Europeans, chiefly France and Britain; and the United States. China sits brooding on one side of the competition and Islam on another, but neither is yet seriously involved.

Who has gained most from the past month's moves? Undoubtedly, against all the apparent odds, Russia.

The coming victory of a Greater Serbia in the wars of ex-Yugoslavia is a victory for Russia, too. By putting a cousinly arm around the Serbs, Russia has helped deter the West from doing enough to save the non-Serbs.

Nonh of the Balkans, this month's attack by Boris Yeltsin on the expansion of NATO prolongs the frustration of Central Europeans who want NATO's protection and strengthens the do-nothing tendency within NATO itself. Russia's desire to keep Central Europe as a no-man's-land between itself and the West has also contributed to the European Union's slowness to open its eastern doors, revealed again in Essen this month.

For a country supposedly flat on its back, that is not bad. Now add the geo-political implications of the Russian army's march into Chechnya. If this succeeds in its presumed purpose — to deny the Chechens the right of self-determination — the Russians will have shown that they can subdue a small guerrilla army in one rugged patch of the world just when, in another rugged patch, we of the West have in effect flinched away from a small guerrilla army of Bosnia Serbs. The fact that in both places the outcome would be a victory for the imperial instinct makes the contrast even more dismaying.

How does this affect the other contenders? The chief loser, plainly, is Germany. Of all West Europeans, it was the Germans who were first and keenest in opposition to a Great Serbia. The Germans have also been warm supporters of the eastwards expansion of the European Union and NATO. In all these matters, what is good for Russia is a setback for Germany.

If on top of this Russia's army now imposes Russia's will in Chechnya, the Germans will know that the resurgent power on the other side of that no-man's-land to their east possesses a lot more military determination than NATO does. If you are German, a newly tough-jawed Russia makes a worrying neighbour.

And the non-German West Europeans? This is where things get interesting. It may be no accident that this late-1994 period of Russian ebullience and German discomfiture coincides with an apparent change in Germany's relations with some of its partners in the European Union, especially with France.

Both France and Britain now seem more hesitant about the expansion of NATO than they used to be, and then Germany would like. France is raising various difficulties about opening the European Union to new members from the east. And all the leading candidates in France's coming presidential election, now that Jacques Delors has pulled out of the race, are more openly sceptical about a federal future for Europe than Frenchmen used to be, and than almost all Germans still are. These things are not unconnected.

Ever since the two parts of Germany were reunited, the expanded power of a single Germany has been changing calculations throughout Europe. One part of this recalculation is a growing reluctance in other countries to commit themselves to a European federation in which Germany might be able to collect enough supporting votes to overrule them. Hence the emerging possibility of an alliance between France and Britain to insist on a looser, confederal Europe in which that could not happen.

The other possible part of the non-German Europeans' recalculation is even more

thought-provoking. In certain circumstances, a stronger Russia could be a useful counterbalance to the strength of this new Germany. So take care, it could be argued, not to push Russia into hostility towards the whole of Western Europe — for instance, by expanding NATO and the European Union eastwards sooner and farther than Russia would like. Better a muscular but appeased Russia than a Europe in which Germany had more muscle than anybody else.

And the United States? If the Americans thought they would eventually have to pull out of Europe — as Bill Clinton may have thought a year ago — they, too, might see Russia as a useful counterbalance to an otherwise Europe-dominated Germany. Indeed, a year ago the Clinton administration was following a "Russia first" policy, which may have been based on just such a calculation.

Now, however, the Clinton people seem to have changed their minds. They have become much more rigorous towards Russia. It shows in their new zeal to expand NATO, in their recent decision to build up a potentially

Russia-containing Ukraine, in their reluctance to go along with Britain and France in letting the Serbs win a Greater Serbia.

Mr. Clinton may have become more rigorous towards Russia because he now thinks that the United States can and should stay in Europe. That, if it does, it can provide the necessary counterweight to Germany; and that Russia is therefore no longer needed for that purpose. If the new, powerful Republicans take the same line, this amounts to a radical change in the prospects for the 21st century.

Some of this is speculation but most of it is not. If you peer through the mists, you begin to discern the looming shapes of tomorrow's world.

Note, in particular, on looming fact. It is not necessary to choose between Europe presided over by Germany and a Europe in which a clumsy new Russia is the only available counterpoise to Germany. If America stays in Europe, it can do a much better and wider balancing job. To most people between Vancouver and Vladivostok, that will seem the sensible way to venture into the new century.

International Herald Tribune.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Poet laments state of Palestinian artists

CAIRO (AFP) — Poet Mahmoud Darwish has condemned the poor quality of fellow Palestinian artists, saying their lack of culture meant they would be judged as unworthy of independence. "I am very sad because the Palestinian people cannot boast excellent singers, musicians and dancers," said Mr. Darwish, quoted by the Saudi newspaper Al-Sabq Al-Awsat. "The world judges very harshly a people without culture and believes it does not deserve independence," the poet said at a forum in Abu Dhabi. "My experience in exile has helped me to improve my artistic work and has given me a greater opportunity to study cultural and artistic output," added Mr. Darwish, who left his homeland in the 1970s and now lives in Paris.

UAE official drowns in Gulf

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The head of the Abu Dhabi Development Fund has been found drowned in the Gulf after he went missing during a boat trip on Friday, Al Itihad daily reported Monday. The body of Khalifa Mehiri, director of the government-owned fund, was found on Sunday near the island of Saadiyat. Mr. Mehiri on the trip was found alive, it added. The two men had jumped into the sea in the hope of swimming to the island after water started leaking into their boat's store room. Coastguards backed by defence and interior ministry aeroplanes had searched for the pair after they disappeared during a trip to Abu Dhabi island 34 nautical miles west of Abu Dhabi. Mehiri was also chairman of the national hotel-owners association in Abu Dhabi.

Settlers prepare book honoring Hebron killer

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Jewish settlers are preparing a book honoring Baruch Goldstein, who massacred more than 29 Muslim worshippers at Hebron's Ibrahim Mosque in February. Posters appeared at the weekend in Kiryat Arba, the settlement where Goldstein lived near Hebron, saying "anyone who has pictures, poems or writing about the martyr is requested to send us a copy," the Jerusalem Post reported. Goldstein was killed in the Hebron mosque after opening fire on the worshippers there on Feb. 25. One settler said a cult around Goldstein residents were trying to build a cult around Goldstein. "They go to his grave and recite psalms, they gather in each other's homes and tell stories about Goldstein," he said. Kiryat Arba is home to 5,000 settlers, while 500 Jews live among 110,000 Arabs in Hebron itself.

Saddam sacks agriculture minister

BAGHDAD (AFP) — President Saddam Hussein has sacked agriculture minister Karim Hassan Rida after a fall in farm output. The presidential decree carried by the official Iraqi News Agency gave no reason for the dismissal of Mr. Rida, who was appointed late in May, when President Saddam decided to head the cabinet. But the sacking came after a poor agricultural performance this year which forced the government to reduce food rations in October. President Saddam on Sunday chaired a cabinet meeting aimed at improving agriculture, a sector that has become vital for Baghdad due to the U.N. sanctions imposed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. The sanctions include a trade and oil embargo depriving Baghdad of most of its hard currency revenue. Farm output has fallen by 50 to 60 per cent since the sanctions were set up, because of shortages in pesticides and equipment, and also bad weather, according to a recent Iraqi economic report.

Djibouti government signs peace agreement

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — The Djibouti government Monday signed a peace agreement with the armed opposition Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD). An official signing ceremony was held here in the presence of President Hassan Guedd Ahloun, of FRUD leaders, diplomats and representatives of international organisations. The peace agreement was signed by FRUD's General Ugureh Kifileh Ahmed and Interior Secretary-General Harbi Farab. FRUD was set up in April 1991 by three ethnic Afar groups. In mid-November, 1991, with a force of 3,000 men, launched a full-scale FRUD, with a force of 3,000 men, controlled many towns and villages in the Afar-dominated north of the country.

After the nuclear party, cleaning up isn't optional

By Jessica Mathews

WASHINGTON — The ghosts of weapons programs past are rattling their chains louder and louder. Tonnes of uranium and plutonium scattered at sites around the United States and the former Soviet Union are rusting, corroding, leaking, migrating, concentrating into critical masses, threatening to explode and spreading underground into rivers and water supplies. Most immediately dangerous, enough material to make thousands of bombs is vulnerable to theft in Russia.

It will take decades, and tens of hundreds of billions of dollars, before the radioactive wastes and fissile materials around today are permanently contained or disposed of. As material disperses and storage facilities age and degrade, the task gets harder.

And as more weapons are dismantled, and plutonium production in Russia continues, the amount of material to contend with continues to grow. So does the frustration with having to spend today's tight money on yesterday's problems.

Overseas budget cutters in the United States, eyeing the large cleanup programmes at the Pentagon and the Department of Energy, would like to see them as dispensable, environmental frills. They could not be more wrong. These programmes are addressing real threats that will only become more dangerous and more expensive as time passes.

Ironically, cuts are being proposed just as an explosive new Energy Department report concludes that previous budget cuts are partly to blame for the present hazards at half a dozen U.S. sites, particularly Rocky Flats, just outside Denver.

Big as the American nuclear challenge is, it is dwarfed by environmental and security risks in Russia.

The latest horror to be added to a steadily growing list is the recent revelation that for decades radioactive waste was secretly disposed of in Russia by pumping it directly into the ground, contravening international practice and Soviet claims. The contamination has spread far beyond the injection sites, and experts are now debating whether it will remain a local threat or become a national or even an international one.

But the largest and most immediate nuclear threat comes from theft. Dozens of facilities in Russia, including many outside the military establishment, hold large quantities of highly enriched uranium and plutonium. There is no national inventory of these weapons materials. Even an individual facility may have no idea how many bombs' worth are present, and therefore no way of knowing if material disappears.

Americans who have visited some of the major civilian sites describe fences, easily surmountable fences, ab-

Parrot smugglers find Spain soft touch

By Gideon Long

REUTERS

MADRID — Silver parrots do not come cheap in Madrid's rastro market.

A vendor on the sordid street where caged canaries are piled high among sawdust and unwanted puppies asks 70,000 pesetas (\$450) a bird and will not haggle.

"They're from Guinea," she says. "It costs money to bring them all that way."

She will not say how the parrots — protected under international treaty — come to be in the rastro, but Spanish conservationists know the routes well.

Sailors smuggle them in on timber ships from the rainforests of Gabon and Guinea. At Spain's southern ports, they sell them to waiting traders who truck them to Madrid and all points north.

"Well over half of the birds you see down the rastro are banned for sale," said Juan Creado of the Spanish Ornithological Society (SEO), which in recent years has rescued scores of rare birds from the sprawling Sunday market.

The trade is truly international and the scribbled signs pinned to the cages are designed to entice: "Crimson Bengalis" from India, Jamaican "Buttercup canaries" and "African song birds" from Senegal.

A passing couple stop to buy a pair of sleek grey "Capuchin canaries" from Sumatra, each small enough to be cupped in the palm of a hand.

At 2,000 pesetas (\$15) a pair, the tiny birds are among the cheapest on offer.

The treaty which in theory protects these birds dates back to 1973 when a cluster of countries put their names to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), of Wild Fauna and Flora (WFF).

The number of signatories has since grown to 125.

But Spain dragged its feet in signing and in the eight years since it did, the SEO says it has failed to introduce a single scrap of legislation to enforce the treaty.

Endangered birds have to rely for protection on the country's contraband law which conservationists say is plainly not designed to stamp out traffic in live animals.

In Spain, they point out, the trafficking of macaws and parakeets is not much different from that of fake Rolex watches.

"I've been working with CITES since it started here and I now no longer believe the authorities are serious about it," Miguel Angel Valadez of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said.

"I've been listening to their excuses since 1986. Eight years and there's still no legislation on the table."

The government acknowledges the contraband law contains loopholes but says they are at last being addressed.

"The contraband law is fine as far as sanctioning is concerned but the development of CITES means mod-

ifications do need to be made to ensure it is enforced," a government spokeswoman told Reuters.

"Right now we have a plan to modify it. It's been approved by ministers and should pass through parliament soon. As it is a technical change to an existing law it shouldn't be delayed."

The government points out illegally imported birds can be — and are — seized under existing laws.

Over the years customs officials have found species wrapped in shirts inside suitcases, hidden in the false bottoms of travel bags, enclosed within welded metal cages and stuffed in their dozens inside cardboard poster tubes.

But the WWF says many birds are openly brought in to Spain on false documents and as there are no outward signs of smuggling they are allowed through.

By the time the irregularities come to light the birds are long gone, shipped on to more lucrative European markets.

"We need legislation to differentiate between the traffic of animals and the traffic of contraband goods. We need greater awareness among customs police as to the birds they are dealing with and we need a stiffer fines system," Mr. Valadez said.

"CITES is a marvellous treaty on paper but if member countries don't act on it, what use is it?"

Not surprisingly given the methods employed by live-

King: Time for reorganisation has come

(Continued from page 1)

on national issues.

Based on the sad realities around us, the King said, Jordan should continue to uphold the principles of democracy, political pluralism and human rights and should serve as an example to be emulated in the region.

"There is a need for Jordan to play this role," the King said. "The region cannot hope to change if positive initiatives are not taken by

(countries like ours)." Commenting on remarks made by Minister of Information Jawad Anani that he had received complaints from his Arab counterparts concerning Jordanian media coverage of events in their countries, the King commented: "They (the Arabs) do not seem to accept the fact that we have a free press in Jordan."

His Majesty said Jordan would continue to uphold freedom of the press despite the fact that some journalists

Hamas threatens more attacks

(Continued from page 1)

"The units of Aiman Radi are ready to avenge Aiman's pure blood against the Zionists," he said.

A source close to the armed wing said the attacks could take place all at the same time, or in two incidents.

In claiming the Jerusalem blast Sunday, Izzeddin Al Qassam said the bomber was carrying 10 kilograms of TNT and had intended to board a bus packed with Israeli air force personnel, but a "technical problem" prevented him.

The statement also said Hamas would step up its attacks against Israeli targets, to prove "Jerusalem will remain the capital of Palestine despite the Zionists' settlements."

Hamas has claimed responsibility for most deadly attacks in Israel this year, including the Oct. 19 suicide bombing against a bus in Tel Aviv that killed 23 people.

with Hamas embarrassed PNA Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Asked about Radi's affiliation with Hamas, Mr. Kanafani said: "The police force should be neutral. No political activity should be conducted by any of the officers or any of the members of that force."

Mr. Kanafani and Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Sbaath condemned the attack.

Mr. Kanafani said Radi had failed to turn up for his duties on Dec. 21.

"In my opinion, he was alerted to that (investigation) and that's why he didn't show up," Mr. Kanafani said.

Radi's political affiliation was not clear when he was applied to join the Palestinian police force in August, Mr. Kanafani said. He was trained and began work as a traffic policeman in October.

Mr. Kanafani stressed that extremism could only be halted by "increasing measures that will give Palestinian people here the feeling

that the economic and political situation is much brighter before."

Mr. Kanafani on Sunday issued "a clear condemnation of this criminal act that opened on the holiest day of the birth of Jesus Christ. Although Sunday and Christmas, it was a normal work day for Jews and Muslims in the Holy City."

In another incident the bodyguard protecting the mayor of Jenin shot and wounded five people Monday.

Witnesses said the shot broke out after the mayor threatened the mayor's bodyguard, who threatened their demands to postpone the auction.

Mr. Lahlah, who is accused of collaborating with Israel, was appointed by military administration in late 1980s and his body was selected by the mayor.

One of the wounded year-old Jamal Mohanayed Abu Bakr, was rushed to a hospital in Afula, northern Israel, after a blood transfusion.

OECD sees dynamic Asian economies set for slower growth

RIS (AFP) — Growth in Dynamic Asian Economies (DAEs) accelerated by 11 percentage point to just 7.5 per cent this year, may moderate in 1995. In 1996 with inflation remaining flat, the OECD has said.

The Asian "dragons" — Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand — are now in a "stagnant" circle of growing regional foreign investment and trade flows, which dented the recent OECD session, it said. They also added, for the second year in a row, from strong growth in major Asian economies moving towards more market-oriented structures, particularly China, but also India and Vietnam, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reported.

Export demand from the United States and the Japanese yen's sharp rise, which made DAE exports more competitive on the international scene, also contributed to the DAE's continued brisk expansion. China's economy, estimated to have grown at a striking pace of nearly

12 per cent after just over 13 per cent in 1993, should also slow down gradually over the next two years, the OECD said in its semi-annual Economic Outlook.

But the Chinese economy "may have difficulty achieving a 'soft landing' in which both real growth and inflation fall to single-digit rates," the report said.

Efforts to cool off the overheated economy, which saw gross investment soaring 40 per cent year-on-year in the first eight months, were taking their time because authorities feared "risks of social unrest" as a result of monetary tightening, it added.

But it said measures taken by Chinese authorities to rein in credit and curb inflation were beginning to have an impact.

Inflation, which hit a five-year high of 25 per cent in August, might average just under 22 per cent for 1994 as a whole.

But it should gradually slow to around 11 per cent by 1996, with growth likely to fall to a rate of around 9.5 per cent, the OECD said.

Slower Chinese growth "will have an adverse impact

on the DAEs' exports, especially those of Hong Kong and Taiwan, whose economies have become more dependent on China in recent years," the report said.

However, this could be "partially offset" by a recovery of exports to Western Europe and continued strong demand from the United States and South Asia, according to OECD experts.

The impact of the U.S. recovery on activity in the DAEs was smaller than in the past, since their exports to the United States now only account for 12 per cent of their GDP against 17 per cent in the mid-1980s, these experts said.

Because of comparative advantage, China, now the biggest non-OECD exporter to the U.S. boosted its sales by about 20 per cent in the year to last July, and Malaysia and Thailand recorded gains of 30 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

But exports to the U.S. from the other DAEs were up by a more modest 8.0 per cent on average.

The reason, OECD experts explained, was that these countries have strengthened their comparative

advantage in investment goods and other high value added products now in high demand in China, but facing stiff competition in the U.S. market.

The OECD said the DAEs now seem to have entered a new stage in their development, "somewhat reminiscent of Western Europe in the 1960s."

Their economies were operating close to potential, with growth led mainly by domestic demand, and brisk expansion of intra-regional trade and investment flows.

A net inflow of investment from outside the region, accompanied by advanced technology and managerial know-how, was another comparable feature, with Japan playing a role similar to that of the U.S. in Europe three decades ago.

However, the OECD said, the analogy could not be pressed too far: Income levels and differentials are "quite different" from what they were in Europe in the 1960s — "and there was of course no European country corresponding to China, whose markets provide enormous — but not necessarily stable — potential for growth."

Soaring inflation pressures India's Rao

NEW DELHI (R) — A double-digit inflation rate before India's annual budget in February has put pressure on the ruling Congress Party to consider populist measures to win back support from the poor. Congress officials said Monday.

Year-on-year inflation measured by the wholesale price index touched double digits for the first time in 18 weeks when it went up to 10.02 per cent in the week to Dec. 10.

The rate was 9.75 per cent the previous week. Inflation has been steadily rising for the past three weeks since Nov. 10 when it shot up to 9.43 per cent.

Congress leaders said Mr. Rao was under pressure from senior party leaders to match a recent populist campaign by the left-of-centre opposition groups which denounced Congress in three of four state assembly polls earlier this month.

"Competitive populism has emerged as a serious challenge that we must encounter," Congress spokesman Vinod Gadgil said.

Congress leaders say their problems had been aggravated by investigations into two scandals which forced Mr. Rao to drop three ministers from his cabinet.

Two other ministers resigned in protest against Mr. Rao's handling of the scandals.

Analysts and economists said rising inflation could emerge as a major factor in the next round of state polls in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Orissa and Manipur in February, before the budget is presented on Feb. 28.

The lowest inflation rate recorded in the current fiscal year which ends in March was 8.27 per cent in October. It reached a high of 11.15 per cent in April.

Inflation fell from 17 per

cent in August 1991 after India launched fiscal austerity measures as part of its economic reforms programme, but double-digit inflation returned in March.

A 5.4 per cent inflation rate in the week to July 10, 1994, was the lowest in four years.

"India has suffered from higher rates of inflation in the last three of 34 years. If you take longer periods, it has suffered single-digit inflation. So the present rate is harmful," said S. I. Rao, director-general of the Independent National Council of Applied Economic Research.

"Inflation hurts the poor. Elections have been fought on it. It is not surprising these are coming to the fore," Mr. Rao said.

Ashok Mitra, an economist and a deputy of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), said: "The ongoing liberalisation has only benefited

the people who have been making money in the past. The inflation rate will rise further and it will be difficult to cover it."

Congress decided last week to offer what it called two of three "appealing" promises to voters in a new manifesto before the five state elections. It was not immediately clear what the promises were.

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said Congress could not control inflation.

"The inflation rate will remain high as the government has failed miserably in its fiscal reforms. It has failed miserably in containing the fiscal deficit of the country," said Jay Dubashi, economic advisor to the BJP.

"Last year the fiscal deficit was around 7.3 per cent and it is quite high. The country should head for a fiscal deficit of four per cent," he said.

Nepal's communists map familiar economic policy

THIMANU (R) — Nepal's new communist government, fresh from winning a sweeping vote of confidence, has unveiled the outline of an economic programme which shunned radicalism.

"People in Nepal and outside who may have been expecting a Marxist-Leninist government having come to power have no reason to be alarmed unless the UML government programme unveils," said former finance minister Devendra Raj, now in the opposition.

Prime Minister Birendra read the statement of Prime Minister Mohan Adhikari, the day after Adhikari won a test of confidence without losing a vote.

Adhikari, a life-long non-Marxist, and King Birendra were arch-foes during the 1990 democracy movement which ended the king's absolute powers in 1990.

Adhikari's communist party won a narrow victory in last month's election with the support of opposition.

The government's policy confirmed expectations

that Mr. Adhikari was not inclined to diverge far from the former ruling Congress Party's free-market policies, analysts said.

"My government will follow the policy of economic importance to the role of the private sector in national development," King Birendra said, reading the government's statement.

"My government will follow the policy of encouraging the national and foreign investors for the development of power projects," he said, giving a clear signal that foreign capital would be welcomed in major projects.

The government said it would encourage private sector industries based on indigenous raw materials, and said foreign aid, Nepal's economic lifeline, would be fully utilised.

"There is no dramatic change and I do not find anything new in the UML programme," said Lok Raj Baral, a political science professor at Tribhuvan University.

"This programme is like a soup without salt," said Prakash Chandra Lohani, a deputy with the pro-palace Rastriya Prajatantra Party. "It's a repetition of what has been said during the last three or four years. There is no new approach and strategy to solving the country's problems except promises."

Nigerian government gets tough with currency black market dealings

LAGOS (R) — Nigeria's military government has ordered tough punishments against illegal currency dealers in an effort to stamp out a booming black market trade.

But street dealers in central Lagos still trade in hard currency, apparently unmoved by the decree which prescribes jail terms and heavy fines for offenders.

"The decree is part of the hazards of the job," said one hawkler operating close to the central bank in Lagos.

"The decree sounds tough. But I doubt whether it can kill the black market," said a banker.

Nearly a year after it banned unofficial currency markets, the government has issued a decree making anyone caught buying or selling hard currency at rates other than those set by the state liable to be jailed for two years or fined 100,000 naira (\$4,545) or both.

Corporate offenders will be fined 500,000 naira (\$22,727) and their licences revoked.

The decree prescribes similar punishments for anyone who charges or pays bank interest rates that are above ceilings set by the government.

The new law also makes it a crime for anyone to publish black market rates. Offenders face similar punishment to the dealers.

The decree takes effect retroactively to February this year, a month after the government fixed the exchange rate at 22 naira to the dollar and outlawed the parallel market.

It also imposed a 21 per cent ceiling on interest rates. The changes marked a departure from IMF-backed economic reforms begun by the previous military ruler in 1986 to mend an economy stifled by bureaucracy, corruption, low production and over dependence on crude oil exports.

The official foreign exchange market, dependent on revenue from crude oil sales, has only been able to meet a fraction of the total demand of importers, including manufacturers.

This has forced many importers and other hard currency users to seek foreign exchange at the black market, at several times the official rates.

Haroun Al Rashid Adamu, a member of the National Economic Intelligence Committee, was quoted by the Tribune newspaper as saying that some government ministers had changed hard currency advanced to them for foreign trips at the black market.

OECD: Reformed British economy runs at 3.5% growth rate

PARIS (AFP) — The British economy, strengthened by reform in the 1980s, spurred by nearly four per cent in mid-1994 and structural unemployment was sharply lower than in the 1980s, the OECD said in a report.

Gross domestic product (GDP) would grow overall by 3.5 per cent in 1994 and by the same amount in 1995, and then by 3.0 per cent in 1996, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said.

"The current recovery differs from previous upturns in several respects," the report said. "In particular, there are signs that structural reforms and deregulation in the 1980s are being reflected in a more flexible, less inflation-prone economy. Keen competition has helped to restrain inflation. Productivity performance has been strong, while real wage growth has been moderate."

The report said the "natural rate" of unemployment was about seven per cent to eight per cent which was significantly lower than in the 1980s owing to structural reform.

Overall unemployment, which had fallen since February 1993, should continue to decline. By the end of 1996

the rate might fall to slightly below 8.0 per cent from 9.1 per cent in September 1994 and from a record high point of 10.5 per cent in December 1992.

Underlying inflation had continued to fall "but may be close to a low point," and monetary authorities would have to be "vigilant," the OECD said in its six-monthly Economic Outlook.

An increase in private investment and in the outlook for employment, and a recovery of export markets, should sustain growth of production.

The government had tightened budgetary policy and had increased short-term rates. This should restrain the growth of demand and prevent the economy from overheating.

Prices might rise slightly by about three per cent in 1996, which would be slightly above the mid-point of the government's target range of 1.0-4.0 per cent.

The OECD expected that short-term rates would rise from 5.75 to 7.5 per cent in 1996, commenting that "controlling inflation may be possible with lower interest rates than in the past, as monetary and fiscal policies have been tightened much earlier in the cycle."

Italy's jobless rate rises

ROME (R) — Italy's unemployment rate has risen above 12 per cent for the first time since a new system for calculating the jobless total was introduced two years ago, the National Statistics Institute (ISTAT) has said.

Despite a strong economy, unemployment jumped to 12.1 per cent in the three months to October from 11.60 per cent in the preceding three months.

The number of people in work fell to 19.76 million from 20.18 million in October 1993, it said.

The economy grew faster in 1994 than initially expected thanks mainly to a rapid growth in exports as the weakening Italian lira makes

the country's goods relatively cheap abroad.

But economists say this growth in economic production, which is likely to reach two per cent in 1994, is not being turned into new jobs because industrialists and businessmen are hesitating to invest in more labour because of the country's political uncertainties.

According to ISTAT, however, the number of people in work has not risen since January 1994.

"With all this uncertainty, industrialists and businessmen are not looking beyond the short-term," said Pina Saraceno, director of the Milan-based Institute for Social Research (IRS).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1994

By Thomas S. Pearson, Astrologer, Carol Light Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Set up the appointments that you want to make for this evening early this morning and then dig into the practical side of your situation.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You can easily get into arguments today with friends or business contacts. Be tactful. Keep financial and personal affairs separate.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) Avoid any disagreements which may arise between a partner and a partner. It will soon blow over. Care in motion is necessary.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A fellow associate and an outsider are apt to have a disagreement, but don't take sides and get into trouble. Enjoy a pleasant activity with your mate.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A good friend and some business person could have a confrontation, but don't get yourself involved or there could be problems.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) It is important you keep out of quarrels between others, or you could get hurt. Find a better way of dealing more harmoniously with others.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Keep rooted to activities ahead of you and don't go off on any tangents. Avoid disagreements with a fellow associate.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You can easily argue with one you like because he or she is sensitive. Do not engage in any expensive recreation with close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Don't try to force kin to do what you want or there can be problems, so quietly go about your own business activities with others.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Forget that private anxiety and go after all the interesting projects in the outside world. State your aims to your loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your personal and your business life are not on the same level, so keep them separate. Take care of your own affairs.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You cannot understand the ideas of a bigwig, but keep silent for best results. Don't add personal innovations to your occupation.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You don't know whether to handle some annoying situation or to go out to interesting new activities. Schedule your time well.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise - Zircon

THE Daily Crossword by Norma Steinberg

ACROSS

- Area enclosed by a fence
- Kind of party
- Moody Dec 10
- Figure skater
- Soft it is
- Blue product
- Personnel
- Spice
- Explosive
- Polish (person)
- Father
- "Shut it"
- Ad's opponent
- Reeling
- Chase
- Embarrassment
- Copy of a hand
- Chin
- Melrose
- Midwest outfit
- Short jacket
- Frying of bread
- Latin "go"
- Land up
- Sawtooth
- In the world?
- Yoko
- Crowning glory
- Spout
- Deceive
- Decline
- Best companion
- Still-making
- Call him
- Free him
- Haggers
- Best contest
- Alan Ladd part
- Playfully mock
- Skirtless
- Part with
- World shaped
- Latin
- Between just
- Witch
- Sharp
- Sharp tooth
- Printer
- Conscience
- Glitter
- In no way
- Decompose
- Reve

DOWN

- Truly
- Care of a nerve
- Reel
- Dejected
- Mischievous
- Unbearable
- Blow her nose
- Yellowish purple
- Shel
- Domestic help
- Adversity
- Suppression
- Shirley's class
- Call him
- Free him
- Haggers
- Best contest
- Alan Ladd part
- Playfully mock
- Skirtless
- Part with
- World shaped
- Latin
- Between just
- Witch
- Sharp
- Sharp tooth
- Printer
- Conscience
- Glitter
- In no way
- Decompose
- Reve

Puzzle solved

dy Capp

I HEAR YOUR GRAMPA HAS A NEW PHILOSOPHY...

"THE SECRET TO LIFE IS TO BE OLDER THAN YOUR LAWN!"

HOW PROFOUND CAN YOU GET?

HAY'S WHAT DO YOU NEED? SACHING A PERSON, YOU'RE TOO EASY WITH HIM!

YOU'RE RIGHT, YOU SURE TALK A LOT OF SENSE FOR SUCH A LITTLE LAD!

LOOK, WOMAN! CHILD GUIDANCE IS SOMETHING YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE!

IT I KILLED JON SHIRT NO KET!

WHO EVER HEARD OF WAITING ON TABLES LIKE THAT?

AIN'T YOU READ THE NEWSPAPERS?

DO YOU WANT TO RUIN MY BUSINESS?

NO, BOSS, ON THE CONTRARY, I'LL INCREASE IT!

BOY ARE SOME GUYS BEHIND THE TIMES! THEY DON'T KNOW A GOOD THING WHEN THEY'VE GOT IT!

tt'n'Jeff

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

"Chewing five slices of pizza is better exercise than chewing two slices!"

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MAARD

YUNNE

SOTILD

RUZZEB

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: GIANT GRAVE HERALD TUGLIP

Answer: What the English decorator had — A CHANGE OF ART

business daily beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Premium hikes fail to satisfy insurance companies

★ The decision to increase annual insurance premiums by an average 33 per cent on the compulsory third party type of insurance has failed to satisfy insurance companies. Insurers said the increase was not enough to cover their losses which exceed 50 per cent (Al Dustour).

★ A famous American restaurant chain has agreed to give its name and agency to a Jordanian company which has chosen Shmeisani as the site for its branch to be opened soon. The American company was not willing to operate in Jordan before peace (Al Aswaj).

★ Abdul Wahab Al Za'bi, secretary-general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, is reportedly expected to be appointed general manager of the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company. Being seconded for the post for two years, he will succeed engineer Saad Al Tal who will retire. The company's board of directors has appointed Burhan Abdul Hadi and Mohammad Khalifeh as deputies to the general manager (Al Dustour).

★ A court order has frozen the decision by the Municipality of Greater Amman to demolish some shops on the Mahatta until the court rules on the case brought by the tenants of these shops (Al Dustour).

★ The number of companies registered at the Ministry of Industry and Trade from the beginning of the year until the end of November is 4,210 with a total capital of JD 388,919,519. The number of sole proprietorships registered during the same period stands at 6,066 with a registered capital of JD 835,726,340 (Al Rai).

★ According to a report prepared by Egyptian labour attaches in Arab countries, Jordan comes in third place in terms of the number of Egyptian workers employed in Arab countries. Saudi Arabia topped the list followed by Libya and then Jordan which had 206,000 Egyptian labourers (Al Dustour).

★ The Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce said in a memorandum to the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament that to double customs exemptions to the Civil Consumer Corporation would undermine the principle of competition. Commenting on recommendations by the Financial Committee of the Lower House, the memorandum added that what was needed was not to deepen the recession currently gripping the private sector (Al Dustour).

★ Mohammad Jamjoun has resigned from his post as general manager of the Jordan-Gulf Bank. Before joining the bank two years ago, he was general manager of the Jordan Kuwait Bank for a few years (Al Dustour).

★ A shipment of carpets and moquette worth \$23 million is on its way to Yemen. The shipment is on top of previous sales of carpets and moquette which have been well-received by the Yemenis (Al Dustour).

★ The volume of uncleared cheques shot up by JD 6.1 million to reach a record JD 36 million in October 1994. The volume was 29.9 million in September, JD 31.6 million in August and JD 35 million in July. The number of cheques returned for various reasons totalled 43,600 in October compared to 34,800 in September (Al Aswaj).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

HOUSING BANK CENTER JORDAN - JERUSALEM

TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663170

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 26/12/1994			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	NEW CLOSING PRICE
BANKS SECTOR			
ARAB BANK	360	58770	182,000 182,500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	23771	104485	4,450 4,350
BANK OF JORDAN	1200	4571	3,820 3,800
THE HOUSING BANK	9350	52347	5,550 5,600
JORDAN KOWAT BANK	500	1495	3,000 2,990
JORDAN GULF BANK	7742	12168	1,600 1,600
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	7148	26140	3,680 3,650
BUSINESS BANK	14100	49228	3,550 3,480
BEIT KHALIL SAVINGS/INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	450	1387	3,100 3,080
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	121135	181758	1,510 1,510
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	8850	14902	1,710 1,680
BANKS SECTOR	194606	514450	INDEX NUMBER: 187.88
			CHANGE: -0.40%
INSURANCE SECTOR			
ARABIAN SEAS INSURANCE	250	500	1,920 2,000
THE NATIONAL ARABIA INSURANCE	250	813	3,150 3,250
AL-SISIR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	800	3778	4,550 4,750
INSURANCE SECTOR	1300	5090	INDEX NUMBER: 131.31
			CHANGE: +0.58%
SERVICES SECTOR			
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	11411	17379	1,530 1,520
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	1300	1950	1,500 1,500
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	300	1950	6,450 6,500
JORDAN HILDER MINERAL	1000	2205	1,900 2,000
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	100	480	4,900 4,800
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	50	157	3,140 3,140
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1300	3107	2,410 2,390
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	10100	13636	1,370 1,350
JORDAN GULF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	2850	3382	1,220 1,190
JORDAN INTERNATIONAL TRADING CENTER	1000	1045	1,050 1,030
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALMA	720	8995	11,950 12,850
UNITED WIDOLE EAST & COMPOSITE HOTELS	14750	3544	2,430 2,390
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	4450	15429	3,410 3,500
SERVICES SECTOR	49341	104933	INDEX NUMBER: 131.26
			CHANGE: -0.49%
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR			
ATTARQEP CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	100	128	1,290 1,280
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	4481	12870	2,890 2,870
JORDAN PROSPERITY MILLS	1100	3205	1,830 1,900
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	410	3617	9,320 9,300
THE JORDAN WORTED MILLS	10674	82704	7,870 7,750
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	12800	66536	5,750 5,710
ARAB CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	362	9543	15,750 15,600
RAJIA INDUSTRIES	2250	6069	2,750 2,690
DAR AL UAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	21800	354363	16,600 16,200
ARAB INVESTMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	6100	5980	990 970
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	750	9418	1,370 1,310
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10800	9849	930 910
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	1650	2252	1,370 1,360
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRIES	200	831	4,250 4,150
JORDAN ROCKWELL INDUSTRIES	750	9418	1,370 1,310
UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	200	830	4,300 4,150
ALADIN INDUSTRIES	500	2065	4,350 4,130
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/JIMCO	9850	8101	830 830
JORDAN SULPHUR-CHEMICALS	700	1293	1,990 1,990
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	200	552	2,760 2,760
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	550	2283	4,180 4,150
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	96352	608105	INDEX NUMBER: 127.12
			CHANGE: -0.51%
GRAND TOTAL	341599	1232578	INDEX NUMBER: 143.25
			CHANGE: -0.35%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 138853			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET: 180807			

Amman Chamber of Industry to increase cooperation with Palestinians

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The chamber of industry of Jordan and the chamber of industry and trade of Jerusalem have reached an agreement in principle to increase interaction and cooperation and hope to sign a formal protocol soon, an official said Monday.

Walid Al Khatib, a senior official of the Amman-based Chamber of Industry, said the agreement was reached in talks between Khalidoun Abu Hassan, head of the chamber, and Haj Abu Mobammad Khaddoura, head of the Jerusalem Chamber of Industry and Trade.

The agreement involves setting up a data bank for exchange of information between the two sides and the Amman Chamber of Industry extending training to officials of the Jerusalem chamber.

Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times.

"The two sides hope to hold further detailed discussions and identify specific areas of cooperation before signing a formal accord at the earliest possible date," he said.

The chambers of industry and trade of Nablus as well as the Gaza Strip are also interested in entering a similar agreement with the Jordanian chamber of industry, which will follow up on the issue soon, Mr. Khatib said.

A statement issued by Mr. Abu Hassan and Mr. Khaddoura expressed confidence that cooperation between their organisations would "help the national economic interests" of both sides.

In practical terms, cooperation between Jordanian and Palestinian chambers of commerce and industry and other business organisations is expected to further the quest of both sides to advance economic links, particularly that many Jordanian businessmen do have close relations with the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The chamber of industry and commerce of Jerusalem, established in the 1920s, is one of the oldest such organisations in the region but its activities were largely curtailed by Israel after the Jewish state occupied the territories in the 1967 war.

The organisation, which covers Arab East Jerusalem and its environs, assumed a higher significance, after the implementation of Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and Jericho ahead of the rest of the West Bank.

However, it was not immediately clear how cooperation between the chambers of commerce and industry would draw from a still unratified agreement on economic cooperation covering trade and business links as well as monetary and banking

relations between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), which is running self-rule in the territories.

It is known that the PNA is seeking to draw from Jordanian expertise in industry and trade since it sees such links as key to developing the West Bank and Gaza Strip, particularly in view of the relations between Jordanian businessmen and industries and the territories.

According to reports, Palestinian businessmen are keen to set up close links with their Jordanian counterparts whom they see as having an edge on Israeli companies in doing business with the Palestinian market.

But the self-rule authority is seen to be trying to limit cooperation with Jordan to trade and industry in selected areas without specific agreements on other issues or insisting on its own approach to such issues.

China to cut 2m civil service posts in 1995

BEIJING (AFP) — China has announced plans to cut a further two million civil service jobs next year, despite fierce grassroots opposition to streamlining the country's elephantine bureaucracy.

According to Personnel Minister Song Defu, the more than two million job cuts will affect all government offices as well as the country's 1.3 million state-subsidised institutions, whose workforce exceeds 26 million.

The cuts, which must be achieved by the end of 1995, could reduce the number of such organisations by as much as 20 per cent, the China Daily quoted Mr. Song as saying.

"The coming year is the crucial deadline for this reform," Mr. Song said; referring to the streamlining programme agreed by the National People's Congress (NPC) in March last year.

Amid rapid economic growth, China's anomic bureaucracy has been a notable blot on the reform landscape, with many government departments unwilling to give up the power enjoyed during decades of central planning.

When the current reform programme was presented to the NPC, a fifth of all deputies did not vote for it — a particularly high level of dissent in the Chinese political system.

Two previous civil service reforms launched in 1982 and 1988 were not completed amid fierce opposition.

Egypt seeks over \$2.34 per million BTU for gas to Israel

NICOSIA (R) — The price of Egypt's planned gas exports to Israel, a potential benchmark for future regional gas sales, is expected to be over \$2.34 per million British Thermal Units (BTU), the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said Monday.

The authoritative newsletter quoted industry sources as saying that was the price Egypt paid foreign operating companies for their share of gas output.

"It is assumed that Israel would at least have to match this figure plus a premium to cover transport and service costs," MEES said.

Egyptian Oil Minister Hamdi Al Banji said earlier

this year that Israel had indicated it wanted to import about 280 million cubic feet of gas a day for 15 years.

"There is still no regional gas market in the Middle East, so the price to be agreed upon by the two countries would constitute an important yardstick for setting other regional gas prices," MEES said.

The gas is valued against the price of Egypt's Suez Blend benchmark crude, minus 15 per cent, it said.

Gas sales to Israel would be pumped by pipeline through a network which could also serve Palestinian self-rule areas and extend to supply Jordan and Turkey.

GCC states invest \$3.2b in cement plants

DOHA (R) — Arab Gulf states are investing heavily to raise capacity in their cement plants to meet growing demand in the region, an official said Saturday.

Hisham Khawazkia, the Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting industrial information director, said Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states were now investing about \$3.2 billion in some eight new cement projects.

He told Reuters this would raise the GCC's combined cement output capacity at 22 plants to 37.7 million tonnes by 1997 from 28.8 million tonnes current capacity. Mr. Khawazkia estimated

their demand for cement could reach 33 million tonnes in 1997 from about 29 million tonnes this year.

If they operate at full capacity the four million tonnes surplus could be exported to take advantage of high world prices, he said.

To become major world exporters, they will have to invest a further \$2 billion, he said.

The GCC, which comprises Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain, imported about 3.3 million tonnes this year to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

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Financial Jordan Times			
In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank			
New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar			
Currency	16/12/1994	23/12/1994	Percent Change
sterling Pound	1,5605	1,5463	(0.91)%
Deutsche Mark	1,5728	1,5793	(0.41)%
Swiss Franc	1,3329	1,3329	0.00%
French Franc	5,4235	5,4525	(0.53)%
Japanese Yen	100.23	100.12	0.11%

Euro-Currency Interest Rates			
Currency	16/12/1994	23/12/1994	
U.S. Dollar	5.81	7.45	5.93 7.56
Sterling Pound	5.84	7.59	5.87 7.62
Deutsche Mark	5.40	5.79	5.12 5.62
Swiss Franc	5.68	4.68	3.87 4.68
French Franc	5.37	6.56	5.68 6.94
Japanese Yen	2.21	2.59	2.31 2.59

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: 25/12/94			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7030	0.7050	
Sterling Pound	7.0859	1.0913	
Deutsche Mark	0.4447	0.4469	
Swiss Franc	0.5269	0.5295	
French Franc	0.1288	0.1294	
Japanese Yen	0.7014	0.7049	
Thai Baht	0.3973	0.3993	
Swedish Krona	---	---	
Italian Lira	0.0428	0.0430	
Belgian Franc	---	---	

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Drug scandals diminish swimming's year of the Chinese

PARIS (AFP) — Swimming takes a bad hangover into the New Year after a binge too many in 1994 left the World Championships with diminished credibility and the Asian Games discredited.

That left only the Commonwealth Games, where Australia's massive investment in sports development paid off handsomely.

Honest toil found its reward in Victoria, Canada, where "Advance Australia Fair" played like a platinum disk for Samantha Riley, Kieran Perkins and company.

Two weeks later in Rome, China topped the charts but western coaches smelled a rat.

They appealed to the international swimming federation, FINA, and thereafter the season hit the skids.

Less than one month before the Asian Games in Hiroshima in October, panic gripped the Mitsubishi laboratory in Tokyo.

Japan's only testing centre approved by the International Olympic Committee had just been struck off the list, judged incompetent to handle a big international event.

Weeks of frantic effort upgrading the facilities paid off on the eve of the Games when the IOC approved them for the Asian.

The Chinese swimmers, fresh from their Rome triumph, arrived to a media fanfare, but a less friendly welcoming committee was also waiting.

The 18 western coaches had upset FINA by suggesting the world body was failing to combat drugs. So for the first time, FINA decided to act, no doubt encouraged by the threat of a boycott of the next world championships from the Americans.

Drug testers swooped at the Asian Games pool three days before the Games started and again after they ended. Chinese swimmers underwent out-of-competition testing for the first time and seven failed.

The substances found were so sophisticated that before the upgrade, the Tokyo lab would have failed to detect them.

As expected, the Chinese women won all 15 titles at the Games and claimed gold-silver one-twins in all but two races.

But the men were the big surprise, coming from nowhere to dominate the competition.



American Janet Evans swims to victory at the World Championships (AFP photo)

Perhaps not so surprisingly in hindsight, China's chief coach Chen Yungpeng had predicted three weeks before the event that the men, not the women, were the ones to watch out for.

Significantly, no Chinese male swimmer had ever tested positive for drugs before the Asian Games, when four were trapped in one go.

China finished top of the medal standings with 23 golds in 31 events. Those statistics are now being re-written. Ten gold medals were scratched from China's total, five of them handed to the Japanese.

Seventeen-year-old Lu Bin's world 200 metres individual medley record has been scratched and her four gold medals returned.

Along with her, women swimmers Yang Aihua, the 400m freestyle world champion, and Zhou Guanbin and male swimmers Xiong Guming (four gold medals), Hu Bin, Fu Yong and Zhang Bin were banned for two years.

Yang won the world title on September 7. On September 30, she tested positive in Hiroshima for the male hormone testosterone and in a subsequent test within days she was positive for the com-

plex testosterone masking agent dihydrotestosterone.

The Chinese have denied a systematic drug programme but Yoshio Kuroda, head of the Olympic Council of

Asia's medical commission, considers that to use such high-tech drugs, swimmers and coaches would need formidable research and development back-up.



Germany's Franziska Van Almsick

World swimming federation chief Mustapha Larfaoui claims the integrity of the world championships is untouched by the scandal.

But since Dave Haller, the esteemed British coach, first accused China of "going the East German way" at the previous Asian Games in Beijing in 1990, Larfaoui has backed the wrong horse, accusing the west of jealousy and racism.

He may be wrong again. The 12-strong Chinese women's team won 12 of the 16 titles at the Rome World Championships, setting five world records. None of them failed a drugs test. But the East Germans never tested positive for drugs in 15 years of pharmaceutically-assisted world domination.

If China's triumphs in Rome retain little credibility, others still do. Franziska Van Almsick shattered the world 200m freestyle record in a final for which she had failed to qualify.

The 16-year-old finished ninth in the heats but German team-mate Dagmar Hase, in a controversial but legal move, surrendered her place to Van Almsick.

Two-time Olympic champion Janet Evans gave Amer-

ica the 800m freestyle, the once-mighty U.S. women's swimming team's solitary gold.

Alexander Popov, the freestyle sprint czar who had broken Matt Biondi's 100m world record in June, claimed the men's 50m and 100m double, to match his Olympic performance.

Russian team-mate Vladimir Selkov took the 200m backstroke from Spain's Martin Lopez-Zobero, who denied him at the last world championships and Olympics. The latter collected the 100m title while Norbert Rozsa won the 100m and 200m breaststroke for Poland.

Finland's Jani Sievinen took 1.20sec off Tamas Daranyi's world record in the 200m individual medley. The Hungarian, who retired earlier in the year, also lost his 400m individual medley record to American Tom Dolan.

A world record for Samantha Riley in the 100m breaststroke, and for Kieran Perkins, the Olympic champion and 1500m world record holder, in the 400m freestyle, provided Australia's greatest ever night in swimming. Perkins also won the 1500m and Riley the 200m.

Fate of NHL season to be decided this week

NEW YORK (AP) — The fate of the 1994-95 National Hockey League season could be decided this week.

No firm date for cancelling the season has been set. Although NHL commissioner Gary Bettman has the authority to shut it down, it becomes impossible to play a 50-game schedule with a full four rounds of playoffs by July 1.

That would seem to indicate the necessity of the season starting before Jan. 15. Because the owners have said a two-week training camp is required, that means the outlook would have to end this week.

Despite the urgency, negotiations between the NHL and NHL players association will not occur until Tuesday at the earliest. That means three

weeks will have elapsed since the last collective bargaining talks on Dec. 6.

"If we were that close to a real deadline, there would be all kinds of talks going on right now," Union vice-president Ren Baumohrner told the Canadian press. "Talks would be proceeding at a hectic pace."

When talks resume, players expect owners to take aim at group 11 salary arbitration (players aged 23 to 30) as a bargaining chip in getting a deal which doesn't include a payroll.

The NHL has indicated that a collective agreement excluding a salary tax also would have to exclude salary arbitration.

The lockout entered its 87th day Monday.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Doping rumour among sumos

TOKYO (AFP) — Doping has come to haunt the tradition-bound world of Japanese sumo wrestling. "Rumour has it some people among us use muscle-building drugs," said Dewanoumi, board chairman of the Japan Sumo Association, at a meeting of sumo grapplers and stable masters. "It is extremely dangerous for your health," he said. "It will ruin the beauty of the sport." Dewanoumi, a former grand sumo champion, did not mention any names nor did he threaten to punish any drug cheats, according to press reports of the meeting. "Doping is banned in amateur sport but there are no penalties against doping in professional sport," he said. "Don't touch it no matter what."

Meribel giant slalom off

GENEVA (R) — A men's Alpine skiing World Cup giant slalom in Meribel, France, on December 29 has been called off due to lack of snow, an International Ski Federation (FIS) official said. But a women's World Cup slalom scheduled there on December 30 will be raced as planned, the official said. Kitzbuehel, Austria, will step in as substitute venue next January 13 for a downhill postponed earlier in St. Anton, the official said.

Frenchman runs aground in BOC race

SYDNEY (AP) — Frenchman Jean-Luc Van Den Heede ran aground just 80 kilometres from the finish of the second leg of the BOC round the world challenge yacht race. Van Den Heede, who has lying second behind compatriot Christophe Auguin in the endurance event, suffered extensive damage to his yacht and could be forced out of the race, organizers said. Auguin, 35, holds the overall lead after competing the second leg from Cape Town, South Africa, to Sydney Wednesday.

Yekini transferred to Gijon

PIRAEUS, Greece (AP) — Olympiakos Piraeus has freed Nigerian soccer star Rashid Yekini who will join Spain's Gijon team, the Greek club announced Saturday. The announcement did not refer to financial terms but media reports said that agreement to break the player's \$1.2 million two-year contract was reached only after Gijon agreed to pay Olympiakos \$250,000. The Spanish team will also pay \$150,000 to Portuguese club Setubal from which Yekini moved to Piraeus in August. Relations between the 31-year-old Yekini, who played for his country's national team in the 1994 World Cup, and Olympiakos had never been smooth. Yekini had claimed that a "negative mentality" existed among the Olympiakos players. Olympiakos, Greece's most popular team, shares 7th place with Apollon Athens in the 18-team standings with 20 points each after 12 games. The two teams are 14 points behind league leader Panathinaikos Athens.

Parreira concerned at Brazilian exodus

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) — World Cup winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has expressed his concern at the exodus of Brazil's players to Japan. The current coach of Valencia said: "This exodus could create problems in the formation and preparation of future national teams." Parreira had just arrived here from Spain to spend Christmas and New Year in his home country. He added players would need longer to recover from a 24-hour journey from Japan because of worse jet lag than those coming from Europe. Kashima Antlers' Akindo and Bellmare Hiratsuka's Betinho were second and third in Japan's 1994 goalscoring list with 28 and 24 goals respectively.

GOREN BRIDGE

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ			
Q.1—Both vulnerable, as South you hold: ♠K10 ♣AK8842 ♣KQ ♠9 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass What do you bid now?	you hold: ♠976 ♣KQ10642 ♠Vold ♠KQ98 Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?		
Q.2—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold: ♠K43 ♣A9 ♠AQJ63 ♠A64 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♠ Pass What do you bid now?	you hold: ♠7 VK1073 ♠72 ♠AJ9632 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West Pass Pass 3 ♠ Dbl Pass ? What action do you take?		
Q.3—As South, vulnerable, you hold: ♠Q732 ♣AJ108 ♠J87 ♠73 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♠ Pass What do you bid now?	you hold: ♠AQ553 ♠1095 ♠A2 ♠1072 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass 3 ♠ Pass What do you bid now?		
Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold: ♠K10 ♣AK8842 ♣KQ ♠9 The bidding has proceeded: North East South West 1 ♠ Dbl 2 ♠ Pass What do you bid now?	you hold: ♠976 ♣KQ10642 ♠Vold ♠KQ98 Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one no trump. What action do you take?		

Dolphins win AFC East by beating Lions

MIAMI (R) — The Miami Dolphins held Detroit running back Barry Sanders in check, dominated the first half and held on in the second to clinch the AFC East with a 27-20 victory over the Lions Sunday.

Dan Marino completed 26 of 35 passes for 285 yards for Miami (10-6), which will host Kansas City in a wild card playoff game next weekend. Bernie Parmelee scored nine three-point runs in the first half to tie a team record for rushing touchdowns in a game.

"It's nice to win the division and considering some of the injuries we've had to overcome, it shows our character," said Marino.

Saunders rushed for 52 yards but fell 117 short of becoming the third player in NFL history to reach the 2,000-yard mark.

"No, I'm not disappointed," said Sanders. "The game is more important. I'd like to have as many yards as I could, not just 2,000, but I'm not disappointed I didn't get it."

Miami coach Don Shula earned his record, 319th regular-season victory, passing the Chicago Bears' legendary George Halas. Shula passed Halas last season for the overall wins record when he captured his 325th career victory, including post-season triumphs.

"We were in fire offensively," Shula said of Miami's first half. "On defence we held Sanders and put a lot of pressure on the quarterback."

The loss eliminated the Lions (9-7) from the race for the NFC central title. Detroit will play a wild card game against Minnesota or Green Bay.

Asked if he was disappointed about not being able to get Sanders the 2,000-yard milestone, Detroit coach Wayne Fontes said: "The scenario never even got started. We didn't play very well, we didn't block anybody, we couldn't pass the ball, our offence sputtered all evening."

"We're much better than that. We just hope that next week, Saturday or Sunday, we play better."

"We were just terrible today," said Lions safety Bennie Blades.

The Dolphins held the Lions without a first down in the first half, limiting Detroit to 25 total yards.

Parmelee capped Miami's opening drive with a 1-yard touchdown after Marino connected with Mark Ingram for 25 yards and Keith Jackson for 30. The touchdown was the Dolphins' first in the first quarter this season.

Detroit's Jason Hanson and Miami's Pete Stoyanovich traded field goals before Parmelee scored on another

1-yard run with 5:19 left in the second quarter, giving the Dolphins a 17-3 lead. Parmelee increased the advantage to 24-3 just over four minutes later with a 6-yard run.

The Lions stayed in the game when Johnnie Morton, substiting for the injured Mel Gray, returned the ensuing kickoff 93 yards of a score. The touchdown was Detroit's fourth of the season on a kickoff return.

Marino drove the Dolphins 37 yards in 59 seconds and Stoyanovich kicked a 45-yard field goal with two seconds left in the second quarter to put Miami ahead at halftime, 27-10.

The Lions' Dave Krieg was sacked five times and completed 21 of 46 passes for 211 yards. He was 20-for-40 for 206 yards in the second half, but was intercepted in the end zone by linebacker Dwight Hollar early in the third quarter, stopping Detroit's most promising drive to that point.

Hanson kicked a 40-yard field goal late in the period and Krieg hit Aubrey Matthews for a 5-yard touchdown midway through the fourth quarter to rally Detroit within 27-20.

The Lions' final scoring opportunity ended when safety Gene Atkins separated Morton from the ball and safety Michael Stewart came down with the interception.

Manchester United hold off spirited Chelsea to go top

LONDON (R) — Manchester United won 3-2 at Chelsea on Monday to return to the top of the English Premier League. Scot Brian McClair killing off the Loodoo side seconds after they had pulled level in a spirited fightback.

United, making a successful start to the tight end of year programme of four matches in eight days, went one point ahead of Blackburn at least until Monday night when Kenny Dalglish's side were playing Manchester City.

Liverpool goalkeeper David James saved a penalty and pulled off a brilliant injury-time save to help the Merseysiders win 2-1 at Leicester who remain one from bottom.

England under-21 striker Robbie Fowler, with his 18th goal of the season, and Welsh veteran Ian Rush scored for Liverpool who climbed into fourth place on goal difference, above Nottingham Forest, who were held 0-0 at Coventry.

Leicester's Simon Grayson was sent off in the 82nd minute after a second yellow card offence.

Third-placed Newcastle were also held to a scoreless draw at Leeds, while troubled Arsenal drew 0-0 at home against relegation-threatened Aston Villa.

Villa's Ireland international Andy Townsend, back after a six-match suspension, was sent off on the hour for a second bookable offence.

Wimbledon's Andy Thorn suffered the same fate at

Southampton but his side still won 3-2, striker Dean Holdsworth scoring twice.

Manchester United, beaten both at home and away by Chelsea last season on their way to the league title before thrashing them 4-0 in the F.A. Cup final, went two up through Mark Hughes in the 21st minute and an Eric Cantona penalty seconds after the interval.

Then Chelsea proceeded to score as many goals as they had in their previous six matches.

Scot John Spencer pulled one back with a 58th minute penalty and then Eddie Newton headed the equaliser 13 minutes from time.

But from the restart McClair took a pass from Roy Keane to score the winner.

A superb 80th minute save by goalkeeper Gary Walsh from Chelsea substitute Mark Stein ensured United took all three points.

Liverpool's James dived to his right to beat out Steve Thompson's 63rd minute penalty and four minutes later Fowler put them ahead

with a hotly-disputed penalty after Mike Whitlow was adjudged to have pushed defender John Scales.

Leicester pulled one back three minutes from time through substitute Iwao Roberts' header but Liverpool hung on for their first win in six league matches.

Nottingham Forest skipper Stuart Pearce missed a first-half penalty against Coventry.

Newcastle, who have won only one of their last nine matches, had appeals for a

BRITISH SOCCER

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with a hotly-disputed penalty after Mike Whitlow was adjudged to have pushed defender John Scales.

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Southampton 2 Wimbledon 3	West Ham 1 Ipswich 1

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Presents: A world famed movie picture worth watching: THE FLINTSTONES	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	The Lion King for children only Shows: 10:30, 12:30, 3:30, 5:00, 6:15	Roddy Piper — Billy Blanks in Back in Action Shows: 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' CRASH Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	CONCORD '2' Mrs. Doubtfire Shows: 3:00, 5:00	will soon present: Mousa Hijazin (SUM'AA) in the satirical political comedy: Hi Citizen	Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: Al Salam Ya Salam Daily at 8:30 Saturday & Sunday is the theatre's holiday. In English Sunday January 15, 1995			

مكتبة لادبل

Sport's four-letter word risks public backlash

PARIS (AFP) — The ever growing use of a four-letter word by both athletes and sports administrators is wreaking havoc and threatening a backlash from a long suffering public which has had enough.

CASH

The word brought an abrupt end to the American baseball season just as it was boiling up to one of the most exciting in years.

It put a stop to the start of the National Hockey League before a puck had been struck in anger.

A sudden treasure chest of the stuff opened just before Christmas threatened to destroy both the US PGA and the European PGA Tour.

Despite the millions of dollars being paid to professional sportsmen they still want more. Club owners want to pay less — or at least put a limit on the multi-million dollar salaries.

And nowhere has the split over cash been more apparent than in baseball where plans to impose a salary cap sent the men of summer into a frenzy.

The millionaire players went on strike last August, wiping out the last 52 days of the season and forcing the cancellation of the World Series for the first time since 1904.

The strike has brought an angry reaction from the fans. Sales of souvenir clothing are down 50 per cent. Stock values on baseball card manufacturers have plunged as the public has quit purchasing collectibles. Official 1994 World Series baseballs, never used, are being offered at bargain prices, with few takers.

The hockey players were equally irate over plans to introduce salary cap. Talks between the two sides continue but time is rapidly running out.

But the cash crisis is not affecting just team sports.

Greg Norman, who earns an estimated 10 to 15 million dollars a year without ever having to hit a golf ball, unveiled plans at the end of the year to create a new world tour where the top 40 players would play eight tournaments for a total of \$20 million in prize money.

Reaction from the US and European Tours was swift and unbending. Go ahead and play and you're banned. Their anger was understandable. Through years of hard work and development the two tours have helped turn golfers into millionaires. Even modest golfers are made rich thanks to the huge pay-outs to the also-rans.

The fact that Norman saw fit to announce his new Tour without even having a word of discussion with officials from either tour only underlined the fact that there is a growing belief that cash will overcome all.

But, for the moment at least, the lure of more millions has failed to tempt the world's best golfers to sell out loyalty for a larger bank balance.

Another sport awash in cash and facing a crisis is the world of Formula One.

So expensive has the sport become that more and more drivers are being employed because of the millions of dollars of sponsors' money they can bring to the team rather than whether they can actually go fast enough to win.

Bernie Ecclestone, head of the Formula One Constructors Association (FOCA) and International Automobile Federation (FIA) vice-president, keeps the amount of cash swirling around in the sport a tightly guarded secret.

He was clearly embarrassed when a motor magazine revealed earlier this year that his Formula One Promotions and Administrations was Britain's most profitable private company, with profits of 15.4 million pounds from a turnover of 18.8 million pounds; a profit ratio of 80 per cent.

Formula One is the only sport where the public, who are being forced to pay more and more to watch the racing, are never informed on how much the winner of a race earns.

The sporting public have no objection to their idols earning big bucks. But when sportsmen earn six million dollars a year and then complain that they are not getting enough the fan quickly becomes cynical. CASH has become a dirty word.

Ferrari connection clue to cycling success

PARIS (AFP) — Tony Rominger topped the cycling rankings but Miguel Indurain's fourth successive Tour de France still makes him the outstanding rider of 1994.

Indurain, only the third man after Jacques Anquetil and Eddy Merckx to win four Tours in a row, got his timetable wrong earlier in the year and lost the Tour of Italy for the first time in three years.

Evgeny Berzin, one of four Russians to impress in 1995, led from the fourth to 22nd and last stage in the Giro. He also won the Liege-Bastogne-Liege Classic.

Rominger, who made a Bob Beamon-like assault on the hour world record, won the Tour of Spain for the third year running. His 19 wins and 55,291km world record put him top of the official rankings although he abandoned after 13 stages of the Tour de France.

Unfortunately, Rominger, Berzin, Piotr Ugrumov, whose two Alpine stage wins helped him finish second in the Tour de France, and Vladimir Bobrik, who won the Tour of Lombardy, are all associated with Italian guru Michele Ferrari.

Ferrari was sacked by the Gewiss-Balan team in April after saying he saw nothing wrong in using EPO, a red blood cell-producing hormone which has the same effect blood-doping.

The International Olympic Committee's specialist, Francesco Conconi, who used to work with Ferrari, is trying to produce an effective test for this banned substance.

Ferrari was also the doctor for Francesco Moser when he set a world hour record in 1984 and worked with the Italian cross-country skiers and long distance runners like 1984 Olympic 10,000m champion Alberto Tomba.

The cycling world sat up and took notice when three of Ferrari's clients, riding for the Gewiss team, destroyed the opposition in the Fleche Wallonne one-day classic in Belgium in April.

Moreno Argentin, Giorgio Furlan and Berzin put on an unbelievable show and afterwards Argentin announced his retirement.

Berzin may not be as effective next year as his Gewiss team refused to release him. "I don't know I'll be as motivated," he said when told he

would be unable to cash in on his fame with another team.

Indurain does not come out whiter than white as he also failed a drug test for a stimulant which he was able to prove was an ingredient in his accepted treatment for asthma.

He has yet to decide whether to ride in the Tour of Spain which has been moved from April to September to tempt him.

"The only definite objective I have is the Tour de France," he said.

Andrey Chmil, another Russian, won the Paris-Roubaix and his 58km breakaway was the longest in the Hell of the North since the War.

Djamolidin Abdoujaparov from Uzbekistan has been part of the circuit for four years now and his kamikaze sprinting secured another points win in the Tour de France.

Chris Boardman, Britain's 1992 Olympic track pursuit champion, was the rookie of the year.

He led the Tour de France for the first four days and in Sicily in September won the professional pursuit and inaugural time-trial to become Britain's first world road champion since Tom Simpson in 1965.

The road race was won by Luc Leblanc, France's first world champion since five-times Tour de France winner Bernard Hinault in 1980.

Monica Valvik became the first Norwegian women's world champion while Denmark's Hendrik Djernis won his third world championship in mountain biking which makes its Olympic debut at Atlanta in 1996.

Four big names called it a day.

Three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond, Sean Kelly of Ireland, the most successful rider at one-day classics, 1988 Tour de France winner Pedro Delgado, and Phil Anderson, the first Australian to wear the Tour's yellow jersey.

LeMond's last unhappy ride was on July 8 when he had to retire in the Tour de France.

LeMond, who won the sport's blue ribbon event in 1986, 1989 and 1990, had been suffering from a rare



Miguel Indurain races to a place among the Tour's greats

muscular disease for some time.

Doctors are investigating a possible link with his 1987 hunting accident when he had more than 60 lead pellets removed from his liver, kid-

neys and intestines. Forty are still in his body. Two of them are in the lining of his heart.

LeMond had rebounded from the shooting to win in 1989 when he beat French rival Laurent Fignon by eight

seconds — the narrowest margin in Tour history.

Later that year LeMond won his second World Championship road race, and he successfully defended his Tour title the following year.

GOLF 1994

Azinger returned in triumph, Palmer left in tears

The Associated Press

AMID THE CONFRONTATION and controversy on the pro golf tour in 1994, three powerful images stand out: Paul Azinger's triumph, Nick Price's tears and Arnold Palmer's tears.

Azinger was one of three prominent golfers who spent a good part of the season out of action due to injury and illness, a factor that may have contributed to the first sweep of major titles by non-Americans. Among those winners were Jose Maria Olazabal and Ernie Els, who each scored his first major tournament victory.

Azinger's illness was the most serious. He underwent extensive, debilitating treatment for lymphoma — a form of cancer — in his right shoulder. His nine-month absence ended his streak of seven consecutive years in which he won at least one tournament.

But in August, he returned by walking up to the tee box at the Buick Open to long chasers from the gallery, teasing a few blades of grass in the air and smashing his first shot long and straight. Then, in a self-mocking gesture, he held his heart and acted as if he would faint.

"All I wanted to do was live," Azinger said before the tournament, recalling his painful six months of chemotherapy and five weeks of radiation. "I now join a long list of people who have survived cancer."

Another health problem was involved in the United States' 20-12 victory over an international team in the Presidents Cup, a biennial competition patterned on the

Ryder Cup matches.

Greg Norman was afflicted with intestinal problems and was unable to compete for the team made up of players from countries not eligible for the Ryder Cup.

Although price did not play well in that competition, he had a dream season in which he collected two of the four major titles, went to No. 1 on the Sony Rankings, became the first since Tom Watson in 1980 to win five times on the American tour, collected a second consecutive money-winning title, and wrapped up player of the year honors as early as August.

That came in his wire-to-wire, record-setting six-shot triumph with an 11-under-par 269 at the U.S. PGA Championship in Southern Hills.

He also won the British Open, which combined with the U.S. Open victory by Els of South Africa and the U.S. Masters triumph of Spain's Olazabal to account for the first non-American sweep of the big four titles.

Other significant victories were scored by Norman, with a record-breaking romp in the U.S. Players Championship, and Mark McCumber, who picked up his third title of the year in a playoff against Fuzzy Zoeller in the season-ending U.S. Tour championship.

That loss marked Zoeller's fifth runner-up finish in a winless season.

Deane Beman stepped down after 20 years as commissioner of the U.S. PGA tour and was replaced by deputy commissioner Tim Finchem

He immediately had to handle an embarrassing incident involving John Daly. The troubled young golfer scuffled with a 62-year-old spectator outside the Firestone Clubhouse in Akron, Ohio, and once again ended the season on the sidelines.

Finchem was faced by an even more threatening problem late in the year with the announcement of a new world tour. Norman served as the spearhead for the group, which had credibility in a television-rights package with the Fox Network reported at \$25 million for the first year, 1995.

The World Tour organizers said plans called for eighty tournaments around the world, each with a \$3 million purse, for the top 30 players on the Sony World Rankings. Four of the tournaments were planned in the United States — and at least some of them in conflict with U.S. PGA Tour events.

Finchem said players must choose between the World Tour and the established American circuit, not both. All leading U.S. players voiced loyalty to the PGA Tour.

At year's end, the world tour said it was going ahead with plans, but no schedule for 1995 events had been announced.

On the Senior Tour, Lee Trevino won six times before a bulging disc in his neck necessitated late-season surgery.

Dave Stockton and Ray Floyd each won three senior tour titles, with Stockton taking the money-winning title at a record \$1,402,519.



Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona (center) signing a one year contract to coach the team (left) poses with Racing Club officials Eduardo (left) and Juan De Stefano after

Announcement to Jordanian Photographers

The National Committee for Jordan's Week in Japan invites Jordanian photographers (professionals and hobbyists) to participate in a photo contest under the theme "Jordan in 24 hours." Images should depict aspects of daily life in various parts of the Kingdom. Selected photos will be exhibited in Tokyo as part of the cultural activities during the Jordan Week celebrations (May 21 - 28, 1995).

Entries (in the form of slides and transparencies) are accepted from 08.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m. for one week. Interested persons are kindly asked to contact the Committee at the following address:

The Institute of Diplomacy - Amman
Tel: 837916/937917 Fax: 837918

Chinese panel to probe drug scandal

BEIJING (R) — China said it had established a panel to investigate a scandal involving 11 top athletes, suspended after they were found to have used banned performance-enhancing drugs.

China announced the suspension of the 11, including seven from its prestigious swimming team, from local and international competition for up to four years after they tested positive for drugs at October's Asian Games in Hiroshima.

There has been no word on whether their coaches have been punished.

China has said the suspensions demonstrated its vigilance against doping in sport.



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مكتبة الصلح

U.N. review may give a signal on Iraq oil sanction

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Next month's U.N. review of sanctions on Iraq may give the oil market a clue on the key question of whether the oil embargo on Baghdad might be eased by mid-year, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) said on Monday.

"MEES soundings indicate that the Security Council's periodic review of the oil sanctions in mid-January should give a signal to the market as to whether there is likely to be total, partial or no removal of the sanctions by mid-1995," the newsletter said.

"There is now deep international disagreement over the issue."

In an analysis on the sanctions, imposed on Baghdad for invading Kuwait in 1990, it said a large number of Security Council members believe Iraq has fulfilled its responsibilities relating to the oil embargo and the issue should be addressed.

But it added: "It seems that, while the U.S. may be ready to compromise in other areas of dispute with Europe, Russia and China, there is no sign of any flexibility on the Iraqi oil sanctions."

"It is most unlikely that there could be any total lifting of sanctions under these circumstances," it said.

But, it added, one idea increasingly being mooted is a modification of the U.N. resolutions permitting limited Iraqi oil sales — though it was unclear whether an arrangement acceptable to Baghdad and Washington could be arranged.

"What could be in prospect is an intensification of sanctions-busting, with increased volumes of Iraqi petroleum products surfacing in regional and international markets," it said.

The volume of Iraqi oil products reaching the lower Gulf, it said, was understood to have risen rather than fallen despite more frequent interceptions by the U.S. Navy in the Gulf.

The newsletter also said the Security Council's sanctions committee agreed to a Qatari request to allow commercial maritime operations between the capital Doha and Iraqi ports, notably Umm Qasr, provided that the traffic does not violate U.N. resolutions and is limited to humanitarian supplies.

It further decided to allow all countries in the region to engage in such traffic on the same conditions.

It had earlier in the year agreed in principle to a similar request by the United Arab Emirates.

Israel sees 'tactic'

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Gad Yaacobi, said on Monday Iraq had made indirect peace overtures to the Jewish state but he called this a tactic to get the West to ease the sanctions on Baghdad.

"We know Iraq conveys messages indirectly to us and

to the state of Israel in other ways that it is not an enemy of Israel, that it is for the agreement signed with the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation)," Mr. Yaacobi told Israel Radio.

"We also know it's a tactic for obtaining easing of sanctions imposed on Iraq by the Security Council," he said, noting Iraq missed U.N. votes backing Middle East peace moves and avoided any direct contact with Israel.

"Neither I nor members of the Israeli delegation to the U.N. had any contacts, ties, discussions and meetings with Iraqi representatives," Mr. Yaacobi said.

Israel Television said in August that Iraq had indirectly expressed readiness to discuss peace with Israel following the Jewish state's interim peace deal with the PLO giving Palestinians self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

"Iraq has traditionally opposed Middle East peace efforts and during the 1991 Gulf war fired Scud missiles at Israeli population centres. It has given no public hint of any overtures towards Israel."

On Saturday, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein condemned the United States and its allies for maintaining the sanctions, accusing them of acting like the enemies of Jesus, in a televised Christmas message.

"The U.S. government and other Western leaders, through their aggression and unjust blockade... are deliberately killing Iraqi children and elderly people," he said in a speech addressed to the Iraqi people, the Arab Nation, Christians and "all men of goodwill."

Referring to the crippling embargo, President Saddam said Washington and its allies "are no different from those who persecuted Christ and his early disciples, and they falsely claim to follow Christ."

Christians make up around one million of Iraq's population of 16 million. Many of them have emigrated under the pressure of U.N. sanctions.

President Saddam pledged that Iraq "will not bow to the arrogant ones' injustice" and "will keep up the jihad for freedom."

"We are profoundly confident that the blockade imposed by the U.S. administration will be shattered... thanks to the steadfastness of the Iraqi people and with the help of the just countries, organisations and individuals."

Iraqi Christian leaders urged the United Nations to lift the sanctions in a special Christmas appeal.

"Celebrations are taking place, but instead of smiles, people's faces are covered in tears because of the unjust embargo imposed on our people," said Archbishop Avak Assadourian, leader of the Armenian Orthodox Community, in a Christmas article published in Al Iraq newspaper.

Iraqi Kurd chiefs plan meeting to end fighting

ANKARA (Agencies) — The leaders of two rival Kurdish groups in northern Iraq are to meet within a few days to end a week of factional fighting in which at least five people have been killed, an Iraqi Kurdish source said on Monday.

Shazad Saib, the Ankara representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said clashes between the PUK and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) continued on Monday, near the city of Erbil and Shaqlawa, close to Iraq's border with Iran.

"From the messages I'm getting the clashes don't appear to be serious," Mr. Saib told Reuters.

He said PUK leader Jalal Talabani and KDP chief Masoud Barzani would meet in Erbil in the next few days to discuss an end to the fighting. "There have been contacts between Talabani and Barzani. They will sort it out," he said.

Mr. Saib said he did not know how many people had died in the clashes, which began on Dec. 18. The KDP's representative in Turkey estimated last week that five people had been killed in Sulaymaniyah province.

At least 70 people have been killed in clashes between rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq in the past

three days, wounded Kurdish fighters told the Iranian news agency (IRNA) Monday.

The five fighters who gave the toll were KDP members, who were hospitalised in Paveh region of Kermanshah province in western Iran, IRNA said.

The five, who entered Iran through the border region of Nusud, said the clashes had taken place in Sulaymaniyah, Rawanduz and Erbil — towns in the Kurdish-controlled region.

They added that the governor of Halabja had been among those killed and that Talabani family's property in the town of Shaqlawa been looted.

IRNA, quoting Kurdish sources, said Sunday that fighting had been underway in the regions of Miran and Nazmin, between PUK fighters and an alliance of forces loyal to KDP and the Kurdistan's Revolutionary Hizbollah, a pro-Iranian Islamic fundamentalist group.

Another fundamentalist group, the Kurdistan Islamic League (KIL), had stayed out of the latest fighting, it said.

The KDP and PUK have shared power equally, but sometimes acrimoniously, in the regional Iraqi Kurdish government since elections were held in 1992.



RUSSIAN SIEGE: Women and children take shelter in the cellar of their house as Russian forces keep up the bombing of Grozny late Sunday (see page one) (AFP photo).

Creation of information ministry sparks Israeli furor

The Jerusalem Post

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Sunday created a new ministry of information coordination, which will go to Police Minister Moshe Shahal, who will hand over the newly formed portfolio to Yehuda Gonen Segal.

The arrangement raised the hackles of many ministers, who said that having the police minister be information minister smacks of arrangements in totalitarian regimes. The deal barely passed in the cabinet; the four Meretz ministers opposed it, six Labor ministers abstained, and only seven including Rabin, voted for the new appointment.

The new ministry will take responsibility for the government press office (until now under the auspices of the prime minister's office), the government publications office (currently run by the treasury), and the information centre (now part of the education ministry).

At the vehement insistence of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the new ministry will have no role in explaining foreign policy.

Besides the new portfolio, Shahal is to be included in the "inner cabinet" on foreign policy, which will involve him in the peace negotiations.

This is regarded as a significant promotion for him.

Peres initially abstained, but moved to Rabin's side in return for the stipulation that the new ministry would limit its role to explaining domestic policy.

The cabinet session was preceded by a meeting of Labor ministers, at which Rabin revealed the job he found for Segal.

Five Labor ministers, Avraham Shohat, Binyamin Ben Elizer, David Laba'i, Ephraim Sneh, and Uzi Baran told Rabin they were categorically opposed to the new portfolio for Shahal. They argued that having the police minister also be the information minister has precedence only in totalitarian regimes.

"This whole ministry is a ludicrous, artificial, and unnecessary last-minute concoction, and the public will hold it against us," Ben-Elizer argued.

The five also did not want Shahal in the inner cabinet on foreign policy.

When the matter was presented to the full cabinet, Rabin encountered more opposition from the stunned Meretz ministers.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid had last week turned down an offer to be

appointed information minister, on the grounds that "it is something that smacks of a dictatorship. It is no accident that no such ministries exist in democratic states," he said.

"Moreover, the public is not waiting breathlessly for yet another ministry, which, instead of explaining the government's policy, will be forced to spend all its energies and the taxpayer's money to explain why it exists at all."

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein said: "The whole idea seemed to have been lifted straight out of George Orwell's 1984. A democratic society has no need for a propaganda ministry, headed by a commissar who is also in charge of the police."

The cabinet had to go into a brief recess while Rabin unsuccessfully sought to calm the Meretz ministers down.

Shahal complained bitterly that he "is surrounded in the cabinet by many devoted friends who know only how to talk behind my back. This is not Orwell and not 1984. My task will be to coordinate information campaigns for the various ministries and explain to the citizens what their rights are. What is wrong with that?"

Labour Secretary-General Nissim Zivli expressed satisfaction with the arrangement, and predicted that the government would be further expanded with the appointment of another Labour minister, "which will coincide probably with Shah's return to the coalition."

Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair said there was no justification for delaying Segal's cabinet appointment because of a complaint by Likud MK Limor Livnat. Livnat charged that Segal had received money from Hamat Gader for serving as a consultant.

Ben-Yair ordered Segal to return all the money he had received beyond the limit allowed MKs for work outside the Knesset. Israel Radio quoted Segal as promising to return the money. Ben-Yair said he was also investigating an anonymous complaint regarding services Segal provided the Hamat Gader baths.

Meanwhile, Rabin last night informed MK Alex Goldfarb that he is to be appointed deputy housing minister. Housing Minister Binyamin Ben Elizer agreed to take him on, after Goldfarb was denied a deputy ministerial post in the finance and interior ministries.

Turkish court sentences 87 charged with massacre

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's state security court on Monday sentenced 87 Muslim fundamentalists to jail sentences ranging from three to 15 years for their part in a massacre in which 37 people were burned alive.

The verdict and sentences sparked uproar in the court, with a number of those convicted hurling their wooden benches at the judges, although no-one was hurt in the scuffles.

A number of journalists, whom the accused blamed for "influencing the outcome of the trial," were also slightly hurt in the disturbance, said the semi-official Anatolia news agency.

The court acquitted 37 other people tried in connection with the burning alive of 37 people in Sivas last year.

The trial's star defendant,

Cafer Ercakmak, accused of being a ringleader of the attack, was convicted in his absence, having fled abroad.

The court rejected prosecution demands for death sentences against 29 of the 124 defendants, convicting them of homicide rather than "crimes against the state."

The prosecutor had also demanded sentences of between five and 15 years prison for 42 defendants on charges of belonging to a subversive organisation.

On July 2 last year, several hundred people led fundamentalists set fire to the Madimak Hotel in Sivas, in eastern central Turkey, where several leading intellectuals were staying, including the satirical writer Aziz Nesin.

The intellectuals were attending on Alawite festival

commemorating the 400th anniversary of the birth of the poet Pir Sultan Abdal, a member of a progressive Muslim sect.

The crowd was protesting against remarks made by Mr. Nesin, who cast doubt on the originality of the Koran during a debate a few hours earlier.

Some of the defendants admitted in court that they had been in the crowd outside the hotel, while denying being among the arsonists.

Nine of those in court had been identified by witnesses as responsible for starting the fire, which firemen arrived too late to bring under control.

Defendants shouted "Islam or death" and "Allah Akbar" after the verdicts were announced. They broke courtroom furniture and

threw pieces of wood at members of the media, a Reuters television cameraman said.

Mr. Nesin, a Turkish author who published excerpts from Salman Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses" in a daily newspaper, escaped the burning hotel with light injuries.

Mr. Rushdie has been in hiding since late Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered that he be killed for offending Muslims in the book.

Islamists say the riots were provoked by both the Alawite festival and the presence in Sivas of outspoken secularist Nesin.

The court's three-member panel of judges announced Mr. Nesin would be charged with provoking the riots, Anatolia said.

11 groups accuse government of violating freedoms

AMMAN (J.T.) — Eleven

Jordanian parties opposing peace talks with Israel have issued a statement condemning what they termed as violations of public freedoms by the government.

The parties said in their statement, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times, that they studied "violations of public freedoms" in a meeting they held Thursday, Dec. 22, and found out that government practices violate the simplest rights of citizens guaranteed by the Constitution.

Asserting that public freedoms were better protected in the period of martial law than in the present democratic era, the statement said people are now making fun of the current "tragic democratic situation and about freedoms."

The statement gave several examples of what it described as violations of public freedoms. It said secretaries-general of political parties and deputies representing opposition parties were prevented from attending a workshop on normalising ties with Israel held recently at

the Professional Associations Complex.

The government also prevented holding a reception organised by the Professional Associations Union to honour deputies and public figures opposing the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty under various pretexts, it said.

It further said that former Deputy Mohammad Abu Fares was detained for one night and was placed in a "shameful" condition, and is thus far still "chased" because "he talks to worshippers in mosques despite the fact that he holds a doctorate degree in Islamic Sharia."

In addition, it added, some civil servants were arbitrarily transferred because of their political stands and citizens are still being summoned by the authorities. The trial of chief editors of weekly newspapers, whether those operated by political parties or not, are still continuing thus far under the pretext of violating the Press and Publications Law, the statement continued.

It said all such moves were

continuing despite the voices of protest and memos sent by opposition parties to the prime minister and demands at meetings with government officials to stop "violating public freedoms" and to give way to the opposition to express its views through all democratic means guaranteed by the Constitution and the Political Parties Laws. It urged the government to allow the political parties to express their views through marches, sit-ins, festivals, strikes and the official and semi-official mass media which they said should not be monopolised by parties and forces supporting the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and government policies.

"The undersigned parties are deeply worried and distressed over the strangling of freedoms and the deterioration in the democratic march and demand that these practices be stopped and that a halt be brought to silencing the opposition and any other practices leading to destroying the democratic march," said the statement, dated Dec. 24.

Democracy, it stressed, is indivisible and through practicing it the people can participate in the decision-making process and in preventing political and economic disasters, and "thus protecting the country and aborting the American-Zionist scheme which seeks to ruin our people and nation."

The parties urged the Jordanian people, represented by all its democratic, parliamentary, professional and labour sectors, to defend public freedoms and protect the democratisation process, saying this process was threatened by the government practices.

The statement was signed by the Jordan Socialist Arab Baath Party, the Islamic Action Front, the Pan-Arab Action Front, the Jordan Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordan People's Democratic Party, the Jordan Communist Party, the Jordan Arab Democratic Party, the Jordan Democratic Popular Unity Party, the Jordan Progressive Democratic Party, the Progressive Arab Baath Party and the Constitutional Bloc party.

Syria: Israel wants to swallow part of Golan

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria told Israel on Monday that its security could be achieved and guaranteed only by a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights and not by keeping observation posts at the strategic plateau.

The official daily newspaper Tishreen said demands made by Israel during last week's direct talks with Syria in Washington were aimed at "swallowing part of the Golan" but vowed Damascus will never abandon any of its territories.

"Security and stability in the area could only be achieved by Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan and South Lebanon and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace which is based on U.N. resolutions," Tishreen said.

"The honourable and real peace is the best guarantee for peace and not occupation or security posts," it said.

The official Syrian news agency SANA said on Sunday the Washington talks, which began on Thursday with the participation of the most senior Syrian and Israeli officials so far, had ended without any progress.

It said Israel made "impossible demands" during the talks between Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and Syrian Ambassador Walid Al Mousallem, who were joined by the military chiefs of the two countries, Israeli Lieutenant-General Ehud Barak and Syria's Major-General Hikmat Shihabi.

SANA did not give details, but the official daily Al Baath said earlier Israel asked to keep observation posts at strategic points in the Golan as part of security arrangements and that Syria rejected the demand.

Tishreen said security zones and observation posts could not ensure security for Israel. It cited South Lebanon, where Israel maintains a self-styled 15-kilometres deep "security zone," as an example.

"If we take South Lebanon as an example, we will clearly see that the security zone did not ensure security to Israel."

Dozens of Israeli soldiers have been killed or wounded in South Lebanon this year in continuous attacks by Lebanese and Palestinian guerrillas who oppose the peace process.

"Even if we adopt the Israeli logic on security zones then each security zone should have another security zone to protect it and so on," Tishreen said.

It said Israel's security demands in Washington were "a pretext to cover its expansionist plans because Israeli rulers want to swallow part of the occupied Arab lands including the Golan."

But Syria will never abandon an inch of its land or the land of Lebanon. Syria links peace in the region to Israel's full withdrawal to the lines of June 4, 1967," the paper said.

Syria's peace talks with Israel which began over three years ago are stalled over withdrawal from the Golan, seized by Israel in the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and future ties.

Israel says it will not reveal the extent of pullback before Syria agrees to establish full normal ties with the Jewish state.

The Iran-backed guerrilla group Hizbollah said Monday that its leader, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, visited Damascus on Sunday and met with Abdul Halim Khaddam, Syria's vice president and the country's top expert on Lebanese affairs.

The statement gave no details of the talks, but said those at the meeting praised guerrilla activity against Israeli occupation of South Lebanon.

Syria dominates Lebanon politically and militarily. Damascus and the Lebanese government support Hizbollah, which is leading the guerrilla war to dislodge Israeli forces and their Lebanese allies.

COLUMN

Prodigal brother found

TAIPEI (AFP) — A rich woman following the instructions of a Taoist god miraculously found her long-lost brother, who had subsisted by begging for the past five years, the local press reported Monday. The woman, identified only as surnamed Yin, sought help from a Taoist god worshipped at a temple in Ilan, northeastern Taiwan. A "divine diagram" she selected instructed Yin to look for her brother at the central market in Taichung, eastern Taiwan, the United Daily News said. Yin found her 46-year-old brother, Ah Yi, at the market. The prodigal brother had left his rich family 16 years before, after his parents objected to his plan to marry a club service girl. He had taken up begging five years ago.

Over 10,000 Britons travel to Finland

HELSINKI (AFP) — More than 10,000 Britons will travel this and next week to Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland, to see Santa Claus. British tour operators have chartered 74 flights to Rovaniemi as against 33 last year. Goodwood Travel began one-day trips by Concorde 10 years ago, and this has already become a tradition. There will be two trips by Concorde this Christmas. In addition to the Britons, there will be hundreds of tourists also from other European countries visiting Lapland. Meanwhile Santa Claus announced that he and his 30 helpers have answered about 200,000 letters this year. We have received letters from all over the world, Santa Claus said in his post office in Rovaniemi, on the Arctic Circle.

Long-awaited Christmas present for Pacific territory

NOUMEA (AFP) — The tiny South Pacific island of Futuna got a long-awaited Christmas present when residents saw their first-ever television programme, local television reports said here. The island, part of the French territory of Wallis and Futuna, will initially receive 10 hours a day of pre-recorded programmes from nearby Wallis, and will get a live service from January. RFO Television said in a report monitored here. RFO said it would produce a regional news bulletin for the territory in the local language of Futuna, which has just 60 square kilometres of territory for its 5,000 residents — three times a week. Futuna was the only remaining French overseas territory without television service and the move should go some way to ease the traditional rivalry between the island and its sister island Wallis, which has had TV service since 1986.

3 suspected poachers shot dead in Kruger Park

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Three suspected poachers, thought to be Mozambicans, have been shot dead in Kruger Park, South Africa's showpiece game reserve in Eastern Transvaal province, public SABC radio said Monday. The killings came after a game warden found buffalo carcasses in the Nuanetsi area of the Kruger park near the Mozambique border, the radio said. While following tracks away from the carcasses, the warden came under fire from a group of the Mozambican side of the border. He returned fire before retreating to get help from the South African National Defence Force. On their arrival, the soldiers found the bodies of three men as well as buffalo and giraffe meat, searchlights and batteries, the SABC said. On Saturday, game wardens shot dead one of three suspected poachers in Umfolozi Game Reserve in northern KwaZulu-Natal province. The men had been busy cutting the horns off four white rhinos they had killed when they were surprised by rangers. Two suspects managed to flee and the third was shot dead.